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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY.

VOLUME XIII.

CONTAINING,

LETTERS TO SEVERAL OPPONENTS, AND TRACTS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS OF POLEMICAL DIVINITY.

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SOLD BY THOMAS BLANSHARD, 14, CITY-ROAD; ALSO, BY J. BUTTERWORTH, FLEET-STREET; W. BAYNES, AND J. HAMILTON, PATERNOSTER-ROW; AND W. KENT, HOLBORN.

1812.

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A

LETTER

To the Author of

THE ENTHUSIASM OF METHODISTS AND PAPISTS COMPARED.

Agedum! Pauca accipe contra. HOR.

SIR,

1. IN your late pamphlets you have undertaken to prove, that Mr. Whitefield and I are gross enthusiasts; and that our "whole conduct is but a counter-part of the most wild fanaticisms of the most abominable communion in its most corrupt ages," (preface, p. 3.) You endeavour to support this charge against us, by quotations from our own writings: compared with quotations from celebrated writers of the Romish communion.

2. It lies upon me to answer for one. But I must not burden you with too long an answer; lest ("for want either of leisure or inclination," (preface, p. 5,) you should not give this, any more than my other tracts, a reading. In order therefore to spare both you and myself, I shall at present consider only your first part; and that as briefly as possible. Accordingly I shall not meddle with your other

N. B. The Author's words are inserted between inverted commas.

quotations; but leaving them to whom they may concern, shall only examine, whether those you have made from my writings, prove the charge of enthusiasm, or not.

This, I conceive, will be abundantly sufficient, to decide the question between you and me. If these do prove the charge, I am cast: if they do not, if they are the words of truth and soberness, it will be an objection of no real weight, against sentiments just in themselves, though they should also be found in the writings of Papists: yea, of Mahometans or Pagans.

3. Let the eight pages you *borrow*, stand as they are. I presume they will do neither good nor harm. In the tenth you say, "The Methodists act on the same plan with the Papists; not perhaps from compact and design; but a similar configuration and texture of brain, or the fumes of imagination producing similar effects. From a commiseration of horror, arising from the grievous corruptions of the world, perhaps from a real motive of sincere piety, they both set out with warm pretences to a reformation." Sir, this is an uncommon thought! That sincere piety should arise from the "configuration and texture of the brain!" As well as, that "pretences to a reformation" should spring from a "real motive of sincere piety!"

4. You go on, "Both commonly begin their adventures with field-preaching," (Enthusiasm, &c. p. 11.) Sir, do you condemn field-preaching *toto genere*, as evil in itself? Have a care! or you (I should say, the gentleman that assists you) will speak a little too plain, and betray the *real* motives of his *sincere* antipathy to the people called Methodists. Or do you condemn the preaching on Hannam-mount, in particular, to the colliers of Kingswood? If you doubt, whether this has "done any real good," it is a very easy thing to be informed. And I leave it with all impartial men, whether the good which has in fact been done by preaching there, and which could not possibly have been done any other way, does not abundantly "justify the irregularity of it," p. 15.

5. But you think I am herein "inconsistent" with myself. For I say, '*The uncommonness is the very circum-*

stance that recommends it.' (I mean, that recommended it to the colliers in Kingswood:) And yet I said, but a page or two before, 'We are not suffered to preach in the churches: else we should prefer them to any places whatsoever.' Sir, I still aver, both the one and the other. I do *prefer* the preaching in a church when I am suffered: and yet, when I am not, the wise providence of God overrules this very circumstance for good: many coming to hear, because of the uncommonness of the thing, who would otherwise not have heard at all.

6. Your second charge is, That I "abuse the clergy, throw out so much gall of bitterness against them! And impute this black art of calumny to the Spirit and power given from God," (p. 15.) Sir, I plead not guilty to the whole charge. And you have not cited one line to support it. But, if you could support it, what is this to the point in hand? I presume calumny is not enthusiasm. Perhaps you will say, 'But it is something as bad.' True: but it is nothing to the purpose: even the "*imputing this to the Spirit of God*," as you here represent it, is an instance of *art*, not of *enthusiasm*.

7. You charge me thirdly, with "putting on a sanctified appearance, in order to draw followers, by a demure look, precise behaviour, and other marks of external piety. For which reason," you say, "Mr. Wesley made and renewed that noble resolution, not willingly to indulge himself in the least levity of behaviour, or in laughter, no, not for a moment;—to speak no word not tending to the glory of God; and not a tittle of worldly things," (p. 18, 19.) Sir, you miss the mark again. If this "*sanctified appearance*" were "*put on*" to "*draw followers*," if it were for this reason, (as you flatly affirm it was,) that "Mr. Wesley made and renewed that noble resolution:" (it was made eleven or twelve years before, about the time of my removal to Lincoln College,) then it can be no instance of enthusiasm, and so does not fall within the design of your present work. Unless your title-page does not belong to your book: for that confines you to the enthusiasm of the Methodists.

8. But to consider this point in another view. You accuse me of "putting on a sanctified appearance, a demure look, precise behaviour, and other marks of external piety." How are you assured, Sir, this was barely *external?* And that it was a bare *appearance* of sanctity? You affirm this as from personal knowledge. Were you then acquainted with me three or four and twenty years ago? "He made and renewed that noble resolution, in order to draw followers." Sir, How do you know that? Are you in God's place, that you take upon you to be the searcher of hearts? "That noble resolution, not willingly to indulge himself in the least levity of behaviour." Sir, I acquit you of having any concern in this matter. But I appeal to all who have the love of God in their hearts, whether this is not a rational, scriptural resolution, worthy the vocation wherewith we are called;—"or in laughter, no, not for a moment." No, nor ought I to indulge in it at all: if I am conscious to myself, it hurts my soul. In which, let every man judge for himself. "To speak no word not tending to the glory of God." —A peculiar instance of enthusiasm this! "And not a tittle of worldly things." The words immediately following are, 'Others may, nay must. But what is that to me?' (Words which in justice you ought to have inserted;) who was then entirely disengaged from worldly business of every kind. Notwithstanding which, I have often since engaged therein, when the order of Providence plainly required it.

9. Though I did not design to meddle with them, yet I must here take notice of three of your instances of Popish enthusiasm. The first, is, That "Mechtildis tortured herself, for having spoken an idle word," (p. 19.) (The point of comparison lies not in torturing herself; but in her doing it, on such an occasion;) the second, "That not a word fell from St. Katharine of Sienna, that was not religious and holy:" the third, "That the lips of Magdalen di Pazzi, were never opened but to chant the praises of God." I would to God the comparison between the Methodists and Papists would hold in this respect! Yea, that you, and all the clergy in England, were guilty of such enthusiasm.

10. You cite as a fourth instance of my enthusiasm, that I say, "A Methodist (a real Christian) cannot adorn himself, on any pretence, with gold or costly apparel," (p. 21.) If this be enthusiasm, let the apostle look to it. His words are clear and express. If you can find a pretence to set them aside, do: I cannot; nor do I desire it.

11. My "seeming contempt of money," (p. 26,) you urge as a fifth instance of enthusiasm. Sir, I understand you. You were obliged to call it *seeming*, lest you should yourself confute the allegation brought in your title-page. But if it be only *seeming*, whatever it prove besides, it cannot prove that I am an enthusiast.

12. Hitherto you have succeeded extremely ill. You have brought five accusations against me: and have not been able to make one good. However, you are resolved to throw dirt enough, that some may stick. So you are next to prove upon me, "a restless impatience and insatiable thirst of travelling, and undertaking dangerous voyages, for the conversion of infidels; together with declared contempt of all dangers, pains, and sufferings; and the designing, loving, and praying for ill usage, persecution, martyrdom, death, and hell," p. 27.

In order to prove this uncommon charge, you produce (p. 31) four scraps of sentences, which you mark as my words, though as they stand in your book, they are neither sense nor grammar. But you do not refer to the page or even the treatise, where any one of them may be found. Sir, it is well you hide your name: or you would be obliged to hide your face, from every man of candour, or even common humanity.

13. "Sometimes indeed," you say, "Mr. Wesley complains of the scoffs both of the great vulgar, and the small," (p. 32,) to prove which, you disjoint and murder (as your manner is) another of my sentences. But at other times the note is changed, and "till he is despised no man is in a state of salvation." "The note is changed!" How so? When did I say otherwise than I do at this day, viz. 'That

none are children of God, but those who are hated, or despised by the children of the devil.'

I must beg you, Sir, in your third part to inform your reader, that whenever any solecism or mangled sentences, appear in the quotations from my writings, they are not chargeable upon me: that if the sense be mine, (which is not always; sometimes you do me too much honour, even in this:) yet I lay no claim to the manner of expression: the English is all your own.

14. "Corporal severities or mortification by tormenting the flesh," (p. 31,) is the next thing you charge upon me. Almost two sentences you bring in proof of this. The one, "Our bed being wet," (it was in a storm at sea,) "I laid me down on the floor, and slept sound till morning: and I believe I shall not find it needful to go to bed, as it is called, any more." But whether I do or not, how will you prove, that my motive is, To "gain a reputation for sanctity?" I desire (if it be not too great a favour) a little evidence for this.

The other fragment of a sentence speaks, "of bearing cold on the naked head, rain and wind, frost and snow," (p. 32.) True; but not as matter of "mortification, by tormenting the flesh." Nothing less. These things are not spoken of there, as voluntary instances of mortification: (you yourself know perfectly well, they are not; only you make free with your friend:) but as some of the unavoidable inconveniences, which attend preaching in the open air.

Therefore you need not be so "sure that the apostle condemns that αφειδια σωματος, not sparing the body, as useless and superstitious, and that it is a false shew of humility," (p. 33.) Humility is entirely out of the question, as well as chastity; in the case of hardships endured, (but not properly chosen) out of love to the souls for which Christ died.

15. You add a word or two of my "ardent desire of going to hell," which you think I "adopted from the Jesuit Nieremberg," (p. 34.) Sir, I know not the man. I am

wholly a stranger both to his person and to his doctrine, but if this is his doctrine, I disclaim it from my heart. I ardently desire that both you and I may go to heaven.

But "Mr. Wesley says, 'A poor old man decided the question of disinterested love.—He said, I do not care what place I am in. Let God put me where he will, or do with me what he will, so I may set forth his honour and glory," p. 35.) He did so. And what then? Do these words imply, "an ardent desire of going to hell?" I do not suppose the "going to hell" ever entered into his thoughts. Nor has it any place in my notion of *disinterested love*. How you may understand that term, I know not.

But you will prove, I have this desire, whether I will or not. You are sure, this was my "*original meaning*," (p. 36,) in the words cited by Mr. Church,

'Doom if thou canst to endless pain,
Or drive me from thy face;'

"God's power or justice," you say, "must be intended; because he speaks of God's love in the very next lines,

'But if thy stronger love constrains,
Let me be sav'd by grace.'

Sir, I will tell you a secret. Those lines are not mine. However, I will once more venture to defend them, and to aver, that your consequence is good for nothing. "If this love is spoken of in the latter lines, then it is not in the former." No! Why not? I take it to be spoken of in both. The plain meaning of which is, 'If thou art not love, I am content to perish. But if thou art, let me find the effects thereof: let me be saved by grace.'

16. You next accuse me of maintaining "*a stoical insensibility*." This objection also you borrow from Mr. Church. You ought likewise to have taken notice, that I had answered it, and openly disowned that doctrine: I mean, according to the rules of common justice. But that is not your failing.

7. Part of your 39th page runs thus: "With respect to all this patient enduring hardships, &c. it has been remarked by learned authors, That some persons by constitutional

temper, have been fond of bearing the worst that could befall them: that others, from a sturdy humour, and the force of education, have made light of the most exquisite tortures: that when enthusiasm comes in, in aid of this natural acquired sturdiness, and men fancy they are upon God's work, and entitled to his rewards, they are immediately all on fire, for rushing into sufferings and pain." I take knowledge of your having faithfully abridged, your own book shall I say? Or the learned Dr. Middleton's? But what is it you are endeavouring to prove?

Quorsum hæc tam putida tendunt?

The paragraph seems to point at me. But the plain, natural tendency of it, is to invalidate that great argument for Christianity, which is drawn from the constancy of the martyrs. Have you not here also spoken a little too plain? Had you not better have kept the mask on a little longer? Indeed you lamely add, "The solid and just comforts which a true martyr receives from above, are groundlessly applied to the counterfeit." But this is not enough even to save appearances.

18. You subjoin a truly surprising thought. "It may moreover be observed, that both ancient and modern enthusiasts always take care to secure some advantage by their sufferings," (p. 40.) O rare enthusiasts! So they are not such fools neither as they are vulgarly supposed to be. This is just of a piece with the "cunning epileptic demoniacs," in your other performance. And do not you think, (if you would but speak all that is in your heart, and let us into the whole secret,) that there was a "compact," likewise between Bishop *Hooper* and his *executioner*, as well as between the *ventriloquist* and the *exorcist*.

But what "advantage do they take care to secure?" A good salary? A handsome fortune? No; quite another matter; "*free communications with God, and fuller manifestations of his goodness*," (ibid.) I dare say, you do not envy them: no more than you do those "self-interested enthusiasts" of old, who were 'tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.'

19. You proceed to prove my enthusiasm from my notions of conversion. And here great allowances are to be made: because you are talking of things quite out of your sphere: you are got into an unknown world! Yet you still talk as magisterially, as if you were only running down the fathers of the primitive church. And, first, you say, I "represent conversion as sudden and instantaneous," (p. 40.) Soft and fair! Do you know what *conversion* is? (A term indeed which I very rarely use, because it rarely occurs in the New Testament.) "Yes, it is, To start up perfect men at once," (p. 41.) Indeed, Sir, it is not. A man is usually converted, long before he is a perfect man. It is probable, most of those Ephesians, to whom St. Paul directed his Epistle, were converted. Yet they were not 'come (few, if any) to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

20. I do not, Sir, I do not undertake to make you understand these things. I am not so vain as to think it is in my power. It is the utmost of my hope to convince you, or at least those who read your works, that you understand just nothing about them.

To put this out of dispute, you go on, "Thus faith and being born of God, are said to be an instantaneous work, at once, and in a moment, as lightning. Justification, the same as regeneration, and having a lively faith, this always in a moment," (ibid.) I know not which to admire most, the English or the sense, which you here father upon me: but in truth it is all your own: I do not thus confound "*faith* and being *born* of God.' I always speak of them as different things: it is you that thus jumble them together. It is you who discover "*justification*" also to be the "same as *regeneration*, and having a lively faith." I take them to be three different things; so different as not ever to come under one *genus*. And yet it is true, that each of these, 'as far as I know,' is at first experienced suddenly: although two of them (I leave you to find out which) gradually increase from that hour.

21. "After these sudden conversions," say you, "they receive their assurances of salvation," (p. 43.) Sir, Mr. Bedford's ignorance in charging this doctrine upon me, might be *involuntary*, and I am persuaded was *real*. But yours cannot be so. It must be *voluntary*; if it is not rather *affected*. For you had before you, while you wrote, the very tract, wherein I corrected Mr. Bedford's mistake, and explicitly declared, 'The assurance whereof I speak, is not an assurance of salvation.' And the very passages you cite from me, prove the same: every one of which (as you yourself know in your own conscience) relates wholly and solely to present pardon, not to future salvation.

Of "*Christian perfection*" (p. 45) I shall not say any thing to *you*, till you have learned a little heathen honesty.

22. That this is a lesson you have not yet learned, appears also from your following section: wherein you roundly affirm, "Whatever they think, say, or do," (i. e. the Methodists, according to their own account,) "is from God. And whatever opposeth, is from the devil." I doubt not, but Mr. Church believed this to be true when he asserted it. But this is no plea for *you*: who having read the answer to Mr. Church, still assert what you know to be false. "Here we have," say you, "the true spirit and very essence of enthusiasm, which sets men above carnal reasoning, and all conviction of plain Scripture," (p. 49.) It may, or may not; that is nothing to me. I am not above either reason or Scripture. To either of these I am ready to submit. But I cannot receive scurrilous invective, instead of Scripture: nor pay the same regard to low buffoonery, as to clear and cogent reasons.

23. With your two following pages, I have nothing to do. But in the 52d, I read as follows. "A Methodist, says Mr. Wesley, went to receive the sacrament—when God was pleased to let him see a crucified Saviour." Very well: and what is this brought to prove? Why, 1. That I am an enthusiast: 2. That I "encourage the notion of the real, corporeal presence, in the sacrifice of the mass." How so?

Why "this is as good an argument for transubstantiation, as several produced by Bellarmin," (p. 57.) Very likely it may; and as good as several produced by you, for the enthusiasm of the Methodists.

24. In that "seraphic rhapsody of divine love," as you term it, which you condemn in the lump, as rant and madness, there are several scriptural expressions, both from the Old and New Testament. At first I imagined you did not know them; those being books which you did not seem to be much acquainted with. But upon laying circumstances together, I rather suppose, you were glad of so handsome an opportunity, to make as if you aimed at *me*, that you might have a home stroke at some of those old enthusiasts.

25. The next words which you cite from me, as a proof of my enthusiasm, are, "The power of God was in an unusual manner present," (p. 61.) I mean, many found an unusual degree of that peace, joy, and love, which St. Paul terms, 'The fruit of the Spirit.' And all these, in conformity to his doctrine, I ascribe to the *power* of God. I know you, in conformity to your principles, ascribe them to the power of nature. But I still believe, according to the old, scriptural hypothesis, that whenever in hearing the Word of God, men are filled with peace and love, God 'confirms that Word by the Holy Ghost given unto those that hear it.'

26. As a further proof of my enthusiasm you mention "special directions, missions, and calls by immediate revelation," (p. 67.) For an instance of which, you cite those words, "'I know and am assured, that God sent forth his light and his truth.'" I did know this. But do I say, by immediate revelation? Not a tittle about it. This is your own ingenious improvement upon my words. "However, it was by a special direction. For your own words in the same paragraph are, 'From the direction I received from God this day, touching an affair of the greatest importance,' (p. 68, 99.) What, are these words in the same paragraph with those, "*I know, and am assured, God sent forth his light and his truth?*" Why then do you tear the paragraph

in two, and put part in your 67th, part in your 68th and 69th pages? O, for a plain reason: to make it look like two instances of enthusiasm, otherwise it could have made but one at the most.

But you cannot make out one, till you have proved, that these directions were by "immediate revelation." I never affirmed they were. I now affirm they were not. Now, Sir, make your best of them. You add, "Let me mention a few directions coming by way of command—Mr. Wesley says, 'I came to Mr. Delamotte's, where I expected a cool reception. But God had prepared the way before me,'" (p. 69.) What, by a command to Mr. Delamotte? Who told you so? Not I: nor any one else: only your own fruitful imagination.

27. Your next discovery is more curious still: that "itinerants order what they want at a public house, and then tell the landlord, that he will be damned, if he takes any thing of them," (p. 69.) I was beating my brain, to find out what *itinerant* this should be; as I could not but imagine, some silly man or other, probably styling himself a Methodist, must some where or other have given some ground for a story so punctually delivered. In the midst of this, a letter from Cornwall informed me, it was I: I myself was the very man, and acquainted me with the place, and the person to whom I said it. But as there are some particulars in that letter (sent without a name) which I did not well understand, I transcribe a few words of it, in hopes that the author will give me fuller information.

'As to the Bishop's declaring, what the landlord of Mitchel says, in respect to your behaviour, I do not at all wonder at the story.' The Bishop's declaring! Whom can he mean? Surely not the Right Reverend Dr. George Lavington, Lord Bishop of Exeter! When, or to whom did he declare it? At Truro, in Cornwall? Or in Plymouth, at his visitation? To all the clergy who were assembled before God, to receive his pastoral instructions? His lordship of Exeter must certainly have more regard to the dignity of the episcopal office!

28. But to proceed. I was not *offended* with the Moravians, for warning men, "against mixing nature with grace;" (p. 71;) but for their doing it in such a manner as tended to destroy all the work of grace in their souls. I did not blame the thing itself, but their *manner* of doing it. And this you know perfectly well. But with you, truth must always give way to wit. At all events, you must have your jest.

29. Had you had any regard to truth, or any desire to represent things as they really are, when you repeated Mr. Church's objection concerning *Lots*, you would have acknowledged, that I have answered it at large. When you have replied to that answer, I may add a word more.

30. You are sadly at a loss under the article of "ecstacies and raptures," to glean up any thing that will serve your purpose. At last, from ten or twelve tracts, you pick out two lines; and those the same you had mentioned before. "'My soul was got up into the holy mount. I had no thought of coming down again into the body.'" And truly you might as well have let these alone. For if by *ecstacy* you mean *trance*, here is no account of any such: but only of one 'rejoicing in God with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' With the "girl of seven years old," (p. 77,) I have nothing to do: though you honestly tack that relation to the other, in order to make me accountable for both. But all is fair toward a Methodist!

31. What I assert concerning "'Peter Wright,'" (p. 79,) is this, 1. That he gave me that relation, (whether I believed it or not, I did not say.) 2. That he died within a month after. Now, Sir, give us a cast of your office. From these two propositions, extract a proof of my being an enthusiast. You may full as easily prove it from these, as from the words you quote next, "'God does now give remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and often in dreams and visions of God,'" (p. 79.) "But afterwards you say, I speak more distrustfully." Indeed I do not. But I guard against enthusiasm, in those words, part of which you have recited. The whole paragraph runs thus,

'From those words, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God:' I told them, they were not to judge of the spirit whereby any one spoke, either by appearance, or by common report, or by their own inward feelings: no, nor by any dreams, visions, or revelations, supposed to be made to their souls, any more than by their tears, or any involuntary effects wrought upon their bodies. I warned them, all these were in themselves of a doubtful, disputable nature: they *might be* from God, and they *might not*, and were therefore not simply to be relied on, (any more than simply to be condemned,) but to be tried by a farther rule; to be brought to the only certain test, the Law and the Testimony.' Sir, can you shew them a better way?

32. The last proof that you produce of my enthusiasm is, "My talking of the great work which God is now beginning to work upon earth," (p. 80.) I own the fact. I do talk of such a work. But I deny the consequence. For if God has begun a great work, then the saying he has, is no enthusiasm. To bring sinners to repentance, to save them from their sins, is allowed by all to be the work of God. Yea, and to save one sinner is a great work of God: much more to save many. But many sinners are saved from their sins at this day, in London, in Bristol, in Kingswood, in Cornwall, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in Whitehaven, in many other parts of England: in Wales, in Ireland, in Scotland: upon the continent of Europe: in Asia, and America. This I term *a great work of God;* so great, as I have not read of for several ages.

You ask, "How I know, so great a work is wrought now? By inspiration?" No; but by common sense. I know it by the evidence of my own eyes and ears. I have seen a considerable part of it: and I have abundant testimony, such as excludes all possible doubt, for what I have not seen.

33. But you are so far from acknowledging any thing of this, as to conclude, in full triumph, "That this new dispensation is a composition of enthusiasm, superstition, and imposture" (p. 81.) It is not clear what you mean by a

"*new dispensation*," (p. 81.) But the clear, and undeniable fact stands thus:—A few years ago, Great Britain and Ireland were covered with vice from sea to sea. Very little of even the form of religion was left: and still less of the power of it. Out of this darkness God commanded light to shine. In a short space, he called thousands of sinners to repentance. They were not only reformed from their outward vices, but likewise changed in their dispositions and tempers; filled with a serious, sober sense of true religion, with love to God and all mankind, with a holy faith producing good works of every kind, works both of piety and mercy.

What could the god of this world do in such a case, to prevent the spreading of this serious, sober religion? The same that he has done from the beginning of the world. To hinder the light of those whom God hath thus changed, from shining before men, he gave them all in general a nickname: he called them Methodists. And this name, as insignificant as it was in itself, effectually answered his intention. For by this means, that light was soon obscured by prejudice, which could not be withstood by Scripture or reason. By the odious and ridiculous ideas affixed to that name, they were condemned in the gross, without ever being heard. So that now any scribbler, with a middling share of low wit, not incumbered with good nature or modesty, may raise a laugh on those whom he cannot confute, and run them down whom he dares not look in the face. By this means even a Comparer of Methodists and Papists, may blaspheme the great work of God, not only without blame, but with applause; at least, from readers of his own stamp. But it is high time, Sir, you should leave your skulking place. Come out, and let us look each other in the face. I have little leisure and less inclination for controversy. Yet I promise, if you will set your name to your third part, I will answer all that shall concern me, in that, as well as the preceding. Till then I remain, Sir,

Canterbury, Your friend and well-wisher,
Feb. 1, 1749-50. JOHN WESLEY.

POSTSCRIPT.

WHEN you come to relate those horrid and shocking things, there may be a danger you are not aware of. Even you yourself may fall (as little as you intend or suspect it) into seriousness. And I am afraid, if once you put off your fool's coat, if you stand naked before cool and sober reason, you yourself may appear as inconsiderable a creature—to use your own phrase, " as if *your name were Perronet.*"

A SECOND LETTER

TO THE

AUTHOR OF THE ENTHUSIASM OF METHODISTS AND PAPISTS COMPARED.

Ecce iterum Chrispinus! Juv.

TO THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF EXETER.

My Lord,

1. I was grieved when I read the following words, in the Third Part of the Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared: "A sensible, honest woman told the Bishop of Exeter, in presence of several witnesses, 'That Mr. John Wesley came to her house, and questioned her, whether she had *an assurance of her salvation?*' Her answer was, that 'she *hoped* she should be saved, but had no absolute *assurance* of it.' Why then replied he, '*you are in hell, you are damned already.*' This so terrified the poor woman, who was then with child, that she was grievously afraid of miscarrying, and could not in a long time recover her right mind. For this, and the Methodists asking her to live upon free cost, she determined to admit no more of them into her house. So much is *her own account* to his lordship, on whose authority it is here published."

2. This renewed the concern I felt some time since, when I was informed (in letters which I have still by me) of your lordship's publishing this account, both at Plymouth, in

Devonshire, and at Truro, in Cornwall, before the clergy assembled from all parts of those counties, at the solemn season of your lordship's visiting your diocese. But I was not informed, that your lordship shewed a deep concern for the honour of God, which you supposed to be so dreadfully violated, or a tender compassion for a presbyter, whom you believed to be rushing into everlasting destruction.

3. In order to be more fully informed, on Saturday, August 25, 1750, Mr. Trembath, of St. Ginneys, Mr. Haime, of Shaftesbury, and I, called at Mr. Morgan's, at Mitchell. The servant telling me her master was not at home, I desired to speak with her mistress, the "honest sensible woman." I immediately asked, 'Did I ever tell you or your husband, that you would be damned if you took any money of me?' (So the story ran in the first part of the Comparison: it has now undergone a very considerable alteration.) 'Or did you or he ever affirm, (another circumstance related at Truro) that I was rude with your maid?' She replied, vehemently, 'Sir, I never said you were, or that you said any such thing. And I do not suppose my husband did. But we have been belied as well as our neighbours.' She added, 'When the bishop came down last, he sent us word that he would dine at our house. But he did not, being invited to a neighbouring gentleman's. He sent for me thither and said, "Good woman, do you know these people that go up and down? Do you know Mr. Wesley? Did not he tell you, you would be damned, if you took any money of him? And did not he offer rudeness to your maid?" I told him, 'No, my lord. He never said any such thing to me, nor to my husband that I know of. He never offered any rudeness to any maid of mine. I never saw or knew any harm of him. But a man told me once (who I was told was a Methodist preacher) that I should be damned, if I did not know my sins were forgiven."

4. This is *her own account* given to me. And an account it is, irreconcileably different (notwithstanding some small

resemblance in the last circumstance) from that she is affirmed to have given your lordship. Whether she did give that account to your lordship or not, your lordship knows best. That the Comparer affirms it, is no proof at all; since he will affirm any thing that suits his purpose.

5. Yet I was sorry to see your lordship's authority cited on such an occasion; inasmuch as many of his readers, not considering the man, may think your lordship did really countenance such a writer: one that turns the most serious, the most awful, the most venerable things into mere farce; that makes the most essential parts of real, experimental religion, matter of low buffoonery; that beginning at the very rise of it in the soul, namely, 'Repentance towards God, a broken and a contrite heart,' goes on to 'faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' whereby 'he that believeth is born of God,' to 'the love of God shed abroad in the heart,' attended with 'peace and joy in the Holy Ghost;' to our subsequent 'wrestling not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and wicked spirits in high places,' and thence to 'perfect love,' the 'loving the Lord our God, with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength:' and treats every one of these sacred topics with the spirit and air of a merry-andrew. What advantage the common enemies of Christianity may reap from this, your lordship cannot be insensible.

6. Your lordship cannot but discern, how the whole tenor of his book tends to destroy the holy Scriptures, to render them vile in the eyes of the people, to make them stink in the nostrils of infidels. For instance. After reading his laboured ridicule of the sorrow and fear which usually attend the first repentance, (called by St. Chrysostom, as well as a thousand other writers, *The pangs* or *throes of the new birth*) what can an infidel think of those and the like expressions in Scripture, 'I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart?' 'Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me?' After his flood of satire on all kinds of conflicts with Satan, what judgment can a Deist form, of

what St. Paul speaks concerning the various wrestlings of a Christian with the wicked one? Above all, how will his bringing the lewd Heathen poets, to expose the pure and spiritual love of God, naturally cause them to look with the same eyes on the most elevated passages of the inspired Writings? What can be more diverting to them, than to apply his Γλυκυπικρον ερωτος, (bitter-sweet of love) to many expressions in the Canticles? (On which undoubtedly he supposes *the fair Circassian* to be a very just paraphrase!) 'Ay, say they; the very case: stay me with apples; for I am *sick of love.*'

7. Probably the Comparer will reply, 'No; I do not ridicule the things themselves: repentance, the new-birth, the fight of faith, or the love of God: all which I know are essential to religion: but only the folly and the enthusiasm which are blended with these by the Methodists.' But how poor a pretence is this? Had this really been the case, how carefully would he have drawn the line under each of these heads, between the sober religion of a Christian, and the enthusiasm of a Methodist? But has he done this? Does he take particular care to shew under each, what is true, as well as what is false religion? Where the former ends and the latter begins? What are the proper boundaries of each? Your lordship knows he does not so much as endeavour it, or take any pains about it; but indiscriminately pours the flood out of his unclean mouth, upon all repentance, faith, love, and holiness.

8. Your lordship will please to observe, that I do not here touch in the least on the merits of the cause. Be the Methodists what they may, fools, madmen, enthusiasts, knaves, impostors, papists, or any thing, yet your lordship perceives, this does not in any degree affect the point in question. Still it behoves every Christian, nay every reasonable Heathen, to consider the subject he is upon, and to take care, not to bring this into contempt, (especially if it be of the last importance,) however inexcusable or contemptible his opponents may be.

9. This consideration, my lord, dwelt much upon my

mind when I read the former parts of the Comparison. I immediately saw there was no encountering a buffoon, by serious reason and argument. This would naturally have furnished both him and his admirers with fresh matter of ridicule. On the other hand, if I should let myself down to a level with him, by a less serious manner of writing than I was accustomed to, I was afraid of debasing the dignity of the subject. Nay, and I knew not but I might catch something of his spirit. I remembered the advice, 'Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him,' Prov. xxvi. 45. And yet I saw there must be an exception in some cases, as the words immediately following shew: 'Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.' I conceive, as if he had said, Yet it is needful in some cases, to 'answer a fool according to his folly,' otherwise he will be 'wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.' I therefore constrained myself to approach as near as I dared, to his own manner of writing. And I trust the occasion will plead my excuse with your lordship, and all reasonable men.

10. One good effect of my thus meeting him on his own ground, is visible already. Instead of endeavouring to defend, he entirely gives up the first part of his Comparison. Indeed I did not expect this, when I observed, that the third part was addressed to me. I took it for granted, that he had therein aimed at something like a Reply to my Answer. But going on, I found myself quite mistaken. He never once attempts a reply to one page, any otherwise than by screaming out, "Pertness, scurrility, effrontery," and in subjoining that deep remark, "Paper and time would be wasted on such stuff," Third part, Preface, p. 15.

11. I cannot but account it another good effect, that he is something less confident than he was before. He is likewise not more angry or more bitter, (for that cannot be) but a few degrees more serious. So that I plainly perceive, this is the way I am to take, if I should have leisure to answer the Third Part; although it is far from my desire

to write in this manner; it is as contrary to my inclination as to my custom.

12. But is it possible that a person of your lordship's character, should countenance such a performance as this? It cannot be your lordship's desire, to put contempt upon all that is truly venerable among men! To stab Christianity to the heart, under the colour of opposing enthusiasm! And to increase and give a sanction to the profaneness, which already overspreads our land as a flood!

13. Were the Methodists ever so bad, yet are they not too despicable and inconsiderable for your lordship's notice! 'Against whom is the king of Israel come out? Against a flea? Against a partridge upon the mountains?' Such they undoubtedly are, if that representation of them be just which the Comparer has given. Against whom (if your lordship espouses his cause) are you stirring up the supreme power of the nation? Against whom does your lordship arm the ministers of all denominations, particularly our brethren of the Established Church; inciting them to paint us out to their several congregations, as not fit to live upon the earth? The effects of this have already appeared in many parts both of Devonshire and Cornwall. Nor have I known any considerable riot in any part of England, for which such preaching did not pave the way.

14. I beg leave to ask, Would it be a satisfaction to your lordship, if national persecution were to return? Does your lordship desire to revive the old laws, *De hæretico comburendo?* Would your lordship rejoice, to see the Methodists themselves, tied to so many stakes in Smithfield? Or would you applaud the execution, though not so legally or decently performed by the mob of Exeter, Plymouth-Dock, or Launceston? My lord, what profit would there be in our blood? Would it be an addition to your lordship's happiness? Or any advantage to the Protestant cause? Or any honour either to our church or nation?

15. The Comparer doubtless would answer, "Yes; for it would prevent the horrid *consequences* of your preaching." My lord, give me leave to say once more, 'I willingly put

the whole cause upon this issue. What are the *general consequences* of our preaching? Are there more *tares* or *wheat?* More *good men destroyed*, (as Mr. Church once supposed) or *wicked men saved?*' The last places in your lordship's diocese, where we began constant preaching, are near Liskeard in Cornwall, and at Tiverton in Devonshire. Now let any man inquire here, 1. What kind of people were those a year ago, who now constantly hear this preaching? 2. What are the *main doctrines* the Methodists have been teaching this twelvemonth? 3. *What effect* have these doctrines had upon their hearers? And if you do not find, 1. That the greater part of these were a year or two ago notoriously wicked men; 2. Yet the main doctrines they have heard since were, 'Love God and your neighbour, and carefully keep his commandments;' and, 3. That they have since exercised themselves herein, and continue so to do: I say, if any reasonable man, who will be at the pains to inquire, does not find this to be an unquestionable fact, I will openly acknowledge myself an enthusiast, or whatever else he shall please to stile me.

16. I beg leave to conclude this address to your lordship with a few more words transcribed from the same letter. 'Allow Mr. Wesley,' says Mr. Church, 'but these few points, and he will defend his conduct beyond expectation,' (Second Letter to Mr. Church.) That is most true. If I *have* indeed *been advancing* nothing but the true knowledge and love of God; if God has made me an *instrument* in *reforming* many sinners, and bringing them to *inward and pure religion;* and if many of these continue holy to this day, and free from all wilful sin: then may I, even I, use those awful words, 'He that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.' But I never expect the world to allow me one of these points. However, I must go on as God shall enable me. I must lay out whatsoever talents he intrusts me with, (whether others will believe I do it or not,) in advancing the true Christian knowledge of God, and the love and fear of God among men; in reforming (if so be it please him to use me still) those who are yet without God

in the world; and in propagating inward and pure religion, 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.'

Sincerely wishing your lordship all happiness in time and in eternity,

I remain, your lordship's most obedient servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

November 27, 1750.

SIR,

1. You have undertaken to prove, (as I observed in my former Letter, a few sentences of which I beg leave to repeat,) That the "whole conduct of the Methodists, is but a counterpart of the most wild fanaticisms of popery," (Preface to the First Part, p. 3.) You endeavour to support this charge, by quotations from our own writings, compared with quotations from Popish authors.

It lies upon me to answer for one. But in order to spare both you and myself, I shall at present consider only your *Second Part*, and that as briefly as possible. Accordingly I shall not meddle with your other quotations, but leaving them to whom they may concern, shall examine, Whether those you have made from my writings prove the charge for which they were made or not.

If they do, I submit. But if they do not, if they are 'the words of truth and soberness,' it is an objection of no real weight, against any sentiment, just in itself, though it should also be found in the writings of Papists; yea, of Mahometans or Pagans.

2. In your first section, in order to prove the "Vain boasting of the Methodists," you quote a part of the following sentence. 'When hath religion, I will not say since the reformation, but since the time of Constantine the Great, made so large a progress in any nation, within so short a space?' (I beg any impartial person to read the

whole passage, from the 227th to the 233d page of the *Third Appeal*, Vol. XII.) I repeat the question, giving the glory to God. And, I trust, without either boasting or enthusiasm.

In your second, you cite (and murder) four or five lines, (p. 1, 9,) from one of my Journals, "as instances of the persuasive eloquence of the Methodist preachers." But it unfortunately happens, that neither of the sentences you quote, were spoken by any preacher at all. You know full well, the one was used only in a private letter; the other by a woman on a bed of sickness.

3. You next undertake to prove "the most insufferable *pride* and *vanity* of the Methodists," (Section III. p. 12, &c.) For this end you quote five passages from my Journals, and one from the Third Appeal.

The first was written (First Journal, Vol. I. p. 248, &c.) in the anguish of my heart, to which I gave vent (between God and my own soul) by breaking out, not into "confidence of boasting," as you term it, but into those expressions of bitter sorrow. 'I went to America to convert the Indians. But O, who shall convert me?'—Some of the words which follow, you have picked out, and very honestly laid before your reader, without either the beginning or end, or one word of the occasion or manner wherein they were spoken.

Your next quotation is equally fair and generous. 'Are they read in philosophy? So was I, &c.' (First Journal, p. 250, &c.) This whole "string of self-commendation," as you call it, being there brought, *ex professo*, to prove, that notwithstanding all this, which I once piqued myself upon, I was at that hour in a state of damnation!

The third (Fourth Journal, Vol. II. p. 79,) is a plain narrative of the manner wherein many of Bristol expressed their joy on my coming unexpectedly into the room, after I had been some time at London. And this, I conceive, will prove the charge of high treason, as well as that of "insufferable *pride* and *vanity*."

You say, fourthly, "A dying woman, who had earnestly

desired to see me, cried out, as I entered the room, 'Art thou come—thou blessed of the Lord?' (Ibid. p. 90.) She did so. And what does this prove?

The fifth passage is this: 'In applying which, my soul was so enlarged, that methought I could have cried out (in another sense than poor, vain Archimedes) *Give me where to stand, and I will shake the earth!*' My meaning is, I found such freedom of thought and speech, (jargon, stuff, enthusiasm to you) that methought could I have then spoken to all the world, they would all have shared in the blessing.

The passage which you quote from the Third Appeal, I am obliged to relate more at large.

'There is one more excuse for denying this work of God, taken from the instruments employed therein; that is, that they are wicked men; and a thousand stories have been handed about to prove it. Yet I cannot but remind considerate men, in how remarkable a manner the wisdom of God has, for many years, guarded against this pretence, with regard to my brother and me in particular. This pretence, i. e. "of not employing fit instruments." These words are yours, though you insert them as mine. The pretence I mentioned was, 'That they were wicked men.' And how God guarded against this, is shewn in what follows. 'From that time, both my brother and I (utterly against our will) came to be more and more observed and known; till we were more spoken of than perhaps two so inconsiderable persons ever were before in the nation. To make us more public still, as *honest* madmen at least, by a strange concurrence of providences, overturning all our preceding resolutions, we were hurried away to America.'

Afterward it follows, 'What persons could in the nature of things have been (antecedently) less liable to exception, with regard to their moral character at least, than those the all-wise God hath now employed? Indeed I cannot devise what manner of men could have been more unexceptionable on all accounts. Had God endued us with greater natural or acquired abilities, this very thing might have been turned into an objection. Had we been remarkably

defective, it would have been matter of objection on the other hand. Had we been *Dissenters* of any kind, or even *Low-Church-Men* (so called), it would have been a great stumbling-block in the way of those who are *zealous for the Church*. And yet, had we continued in the impetuosity of our *high-church zeal*, neither should we have been willing to converse with dissenters, nor they to receive any good at our hands.' Sir, Why did you break off your quotation in the middle of this paragraph, just at 'more unexceptionable on all accounts?' Was it not on purpose to give a wrong turn to the whole? To conceal the real and obvious meaning of my words, and put one upon them that never entered into my thoughts?

5. You have reserved your strong reason for the last, namely, my own confession. "Mr. Wesley says himself, by the most infallible of proofs, *inward feeling*, I am convinced of pride, &c." Sir, be pleased to decypher that &c. Or I will spare you the pains and do it myself, by reciting the whole sentence.

'By the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced,—1. Of unbelief, having no such faith in Christ, as will prevent my heart from being troubled, which it could not be, if I believed in God, and rightly believed also in him.—2. Of pride throughout my life past, inasmuch as I thought I had, what I find I have not.'—(First Journal, Vol. I. p. 246.) Now, Sir, you have my whole confession. I entreat you to make the best of it.

"But I myself acknowledge, three Methodists to have fallen into pride." Sir, I can tell you of three more. And yet it will not follow, that the doctrines I teach, "lead men into horrid pride and blasphemy."

6. In the close of your fourth section, you charge me with, "shuffling and prevaricating, with regard to extraordinary gifts, and miraculous powers." Of these I shall have occasion to speak by and by. At present I need only return the compliment, by charging you with gross, wilful prevarication, from the beginning of your book to the end.

Some instances of this have appeared already. Many more will appear in due time.

7. Your fifth, (Fourth Journal, Vol. II. p. 26.) charges me with an *affectation of prophesying*. Your first proof of it is this—'It was about this time the soldier was executed. For some time I had visited him every day. But when the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, I told him, do not expect to see me any more.—I believe Satan will separate us for a season. Accordingly, the next day, I was informed, the commanding officer had given strict orders that neither Mr. Wesley, nor any of his people, should be admitted.' I did believe so, having seen many such things before: yet without affecting a spirit of prophecy.

But that I do claim it, you will prove, secondly, from my mentioning 'the great work which God *intends*, and is now *beginning* to work over all the earth.' By what art you extract such a conclusion out of such premises, I know not. That God *intends* this, none, who believe the Scripture, doubt. And that he has *begun* it, both in Europe and America, any who will make use of their eyes and ears, may know without any "miraculous gift of prophesying."

8. In your sixth section, you assert, "That I lay claim to other *miraculous gifts*," (page 45, &c.) As you borrow this objection from Mr. Church, I need only give the same answer I gave before. (Letter to Mr. Church, Vol. XII. p. 325.) "I shall give" (says Mr. Church) "but one account more, and that is, what you give of yourself." The sum whereof is, 'At two several times, being ill, and in violent pain, I prayed to God, and found immediate ease.' I did so. I assert the fact still. "But if these" (you say) "are not miraculous cures, all this is rank enthusiasm."

'I will put your argument in form:

He that believes these are miraculous cures, which are not, is a rank enthusiast.

But you believe those to be miraculous cures, which are not:

Therefore you are a rank enthusiast.

Before I answer, I must know what you mean by *miraculous?* If you term every thing so, which is "not strictly to be accounted for, by the ordinary course of natural causes:" then I deny the latter part of the second proposition. And unless you can make this good, unless you can prove the effects in question are strictly to be accounted for, by the ordinary course of natural causes, your argument is nothing worth.'

Having largely answered your next objection relating to what I still term 'a signal instance of God's particular providence,' (Letter to Mr. Church, p. 322,) I need only refer you to those answers, not having leisure to say the same thing ten times over. Whether I sometimes claim, and sometimes disclaim miracles, will be considered by and by.

In your seventh section, you say, "I shall now give some account of their grievous *conflicts and combats* with Satan," (page 51, &c.) O, Sir, spare yourself, if not the Methodists! Do not go so far out of your depth. This is a subject you are as utterly unacquainted with, as with justification or the new-birth.

But I attend your motions. "Mr. Wesley," you say, "was advised, to a very high degree of silence.—And he spoke to none at all for two days, and travelling fourscore miles together.—The same whim," (you go on,) "has run through several of the religious orders.—Hence St. Bonaventura says, That silence in all the religious is necessary to perfection.—St. Agatho held a stone in his mouth for three years, till he had learned taciturnity.—St. Alcantara carried several pebbles in his mouth for three years likewise, and for the same reason.—Theon observed a continual silence for thirty years.—St. Francis observed it himself, and enjoined it upon his brethren. The rule of silence was religiously observed by St. Dominic." I have repeated more of your words than I otherwise should, in order to shew to a demonstration, that a man of a lively imagination, may run a parallel to any length, without any foundation in nature.

You begin, "The same whim" (which led Mr. Wesley to

observe an absolute silence for two days) "and so run on to St. Bonaventura, St. Agatho, and I knew not whom." But did Mr. Wesley "observe an absolute silence for two days?" No; not for one hour. My words, 'I spoke to none at all for fourscore miles together,' (Fourth Journal, Vol. II. p. 81.) imply neither more nor less, than that I spoke to none 'concerning the things of God,' as it is in the words immediately preceding. And you know this as well as I. But it is all one for that. Wit, not truth, is the point you aim at.

My supposed inconsistency, with regard to the Moravians, which you likewise drag in (as they say) by head and shoulders, I have shewn again and again, to be no inconsistency at all: particularly in both the letters to Mr. Church.

10. Well, but as to *conflicts* with Satan. "Nor can Mr. Wesley," you say, "escape the attacks of this infernal spirit, namely, suggesting distrustful thoughts, and buffeting him with inward temptations." Sir, did you never hear of any one so attacked, unless among the Papists or Methodists? How deeply then are you experienced both in the ways of God, and the devices of Satan?

You add, with regard to a case mentioned in the Fourth Journal, (Vol. II. p. 33,) "Though I am not convinced that these *fits of laughing*, are to be ascribed to Satan, yet I entirely agree, that they are *involuntary and unavoidable*." I am glad we agree so far. But I must still go farther; I cannot but ascribe them to a preternatural agent: having observed so many circumstances attending them which cannot be accounted for by any natural causes.

Under the head of conflicts with Satan, you observe farther, "Mr. Wesley says, while he was preaching, the devil knew his kingdom shook, and, therefore stirred up his servants to make a noise: that, September 18, the prince of the air made another attempt, in defence of his tottering kingdom: and that another time, the devil's children fought valiantly for their master." I own the whole charge; I did say all this. Nay, and if need were, I should say it again.

You cite one more instance from my Fourth Journal, "The *many-headed beast* began to roar again." So your head is so full of the subject, that you construe even poor Horace's *Bellua multorum capitum* into the devil! These are all the combats and conflicts with Satan, which you can prove I ever had. O, Sir, without more and greater conflicts than these, none shall see the kingdom of God.

11. In the following sections, you are equally out of your element. The first of them, (Sect. 8, p. 75, &c.) relates to *spiritual desertions;* all which you make the subject of dull ridicule, and place to the account of enthusiasm. And the cause of all you give in the following words, "We may look upon enthusiasm as a kind of drunkenness, filling and intoxicating the brain with the heated fumes of spirituous particles. Now no sooner does the inebriation go off, but a coldness and dulness take place."

12. As wildly do you talk (Sect. 9, p. 79, &c.) of the doubts and fears incident to those who are *weak in faith.* I cannot prevail upon myself, to prostitute this awful subject, by entering into any debate concerning it, with one who is innocent of the whole affair. Only I must observe, that a great part of what you advance concerning me, is entirely wide of the question. Such is all you quote from the first, and a considerable part of what you quote from my second Journal. This you know in your own conscience; for you know I speak of myself during the whole time, as having no faith at all. Consequently, the "risings and fallings" I experienced then, have nothing to do with those "doubts and fears, which many go through, *after they have* by faith received remission of sins."

The next words which you cite, "thrown into great perplexities," I cannot find in the page you refer to; neither those that follow. The sum of them is, that "at that time I did not feel the love of God, but found deadness and wanderings in public prayer, and coldness even at the holy communion." Well, Sir, and have you never found in yourself, any such coldness, deadness, and wanderings? I am persuaded you have. And yet surely your brain is

always cool and temperate! Never "intoxicated with the heated fumes of spirituous particles!"

13. If you quote not incoherent scraps (by which you may make any thing out of any thing) but entire connected sentences, it will appear that the rest of your quotations make no more for your purpose than the foregoing. Thus, although I allow that on May 24, (Second Journal, Vol. I. p. 274,) 'I was much buffeted with temptations, but I cried to God and they fled away; that they returned again and again; I as often lifted up my eyes, and he sent me help from his holy place:' it will only prove the very observation I make myself. 'I was fighting both *under the law* and *under grace*. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered: now I was always conqueror.'

That some time after, I 'was strongly assaulted again, and after recovering peace and joy, was thrown into perplexity afresh by a letter, asserting, that no doubt or fear could consist with true faith: that my weak mind could not then bear to be thus *sawn asunder*;' will not appear strange to any who are not utter novices in experimental religion. No more than that one night the next year, 'I had no life or spirit in me, and was much in doubt, whether God would not lay me aside, and send other labourers into his harvest.'

14. You add, "He owns his frequent relapses into sin, for near twice ten years. Such is the case of a person who tells us, that he carefully considered every step he took; one of intimate communication with the Deity." Sir, I did not tell you that: though, according to custom, you mark the words as mine. It is well for you, that *forging quotations* is not felony. My words are, 'O what an hypocrite have I been (if this be so) for near twice ten years! But I know it is not so. I know every one *under the Law*, is even as I was;' namely, from the time I was twelve years old, till considerably above thirty.

"And is it strange," you say, "that such a one should be destitute of means to resolve his scruples? Should be ever at variance with himself, and find no place to fix his foot?"

Good Sir, not too fast. You quite out-run the truth again. Blessed be God, this is not my case. I am not destitute of means to resolve my scruples. I have some friends, and a little reason left. I am not ever at variance with myself; and have found a place to fix my foot.

'Now I have found the ground wherein
Firm my soul's anchor may remain;
The wounds of Jesus, for my sin
Before the world's foundation slain.'

And yet one of your assertions I cannot deny: namely, that you "could run the parallel between me and numbers of fanatical Papists." And that not only with regard to my temper, but my stature, complexion, yea (if need were) the very colour of my hair.

15. In your next section (p. 29) you are to give an account of the "spiritual succours and advantages received either during these trials or very soon after." It is no wonder you make as lame work with these, as with the conflicts which preceded them. 'As the heart knoweth its own bitterness, so a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.' But it is no business of mine, as you have not done me the honour to cite any of my words in this section.

16. "The unsteadiness of the Methodists, both in sentiments and practice," (p. 95, &c.) is what you next undertake to prove. Your loose declamation with which you open the cause, I pass over, as it rests on your own bare word; and haste to your main reason, drawn from my sentiments and practice, with regard to the Moravians.

"He represents them," you say, "in the blackest colours; yet declares, in the main they are some of the best people in the world. His love and esteem for them, increase more and more. His own disciples among the Methodists go over to them in crowds. But still Methodism is the strongest barrier against the Moravian doctrines and principles."

Sir, I bear you witness, you have learned one principle at least, from those with whom you have lately conversed;

namely, that no faith is to be kept with heretics; of which you have given us abundant proof. For you know I have fully answered every article of this charge, which you repeat as if I had not opened my lips about it. You know, that there is not one grain of truth, in several things which you here positively assert. For instance, "His love and esteem of them, increase more and more." Not so, no more than my love and esteem for you. I love you both; but I do not much esteem either. Again, "His own disciples among the Methodists, go over to them in crowds." When? Where? I know not that ten of my disciples, as you call them, have gone over to them for twice ten months. O Sir, consider! How do you know, but some of your disciples may tell your name!

17. With the same veracity you go on. "In the *Character of a Methodist*, those of the sect are described as having all the virtues that can adorn the Christian profession. But in their journals you find them waspish, condemning all the world, except themselves; and among themselves, perpetual broils and confusions, with various other irregularities and vices." I answer, 1. The tract you refer to (as is expressly declared in the preface) does not describe what the Methodists are already: but what they desire to be, and what they will be then, when they fully practise the doctrines they hear. 2. Be pleased to point the pages in my Journals which mention those "various irregularities and vices." Of their "perpetual broils and confusions" I shall speak under their proper head.

You add, "Sometimes they are so far from fearing death, that they wish it. But the keenness of the edge is soon blunted. They are full of dreadful apprehensions, that the clergy intend to murder them." Do you mean me, Sir? I plead not guilty. I never had any such apprehension. Yet I suppose you designed the compliment for me, by your dragging in two or three broken sentences from my first Journal. But how little to the purpose! Seeing at the time that was written, I had never pretended to be

above the fear of death. So that this is no proof of the point in view, of the "unsteadiness of my sentiments or practice."

18. You proceed, "One day, they fancy it their duty to preach; the next, they preach with great reluctance." Very true! But they fancy it their duty still; else they would not preach at all. This, therefore, does not prove any inequality either of sentiment or practice. "Mr. Wesley is sometimes quite averse from speaking, and then perplexed with the doubt, is it a prohibition from the good Spirit? or a temptation from nature and the evil one?"

Just of a piece with the rest. The sentence runs thus, "I went several times with a design to speak to the sailors, but could not. I mean, I was quite averse from speaking. Is not this what men commonly mean by, *I could not speak?* And is this a sufficient cause of silence or not? Is it a prohibition from the good Spirit? Or a temptation from nature or the evil one?" Sir, I was in no doubt at all on the occasion. Nor did I intend to express any in these words; but to appeal to men's consciences, whether what they call a prohibition from the good Spirit, be not a mere temptation from nature or the evil one?

19. In the next section (p. 102) you are to shew "the *art, cunning*, and *sophistry* of the Methodists, who, when hard pressed by argument, run themselves into inconsistency and self-contradiction; and occasionally either defend or give up some of their favourite notions and principal points." I dare say, Sir, you will not put them to the trial. Argument lies out of the way of one,

——*Solutos*
Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis.

But to the proof, "Mr. Wesley," you say, "at one time declares for a disinterested love of God: at another declares, there is no one caution in all the Bible, against the selfish love of God." Nay, Sir, I will tell you what is stranger still. Mr. Wesley holds *at one time*, both sides of this contradiction. I now declare both that 'all true love is disinterested, *seeketh not her own:* and that there is no one

caution in all the Bible, against the selfish love of God.' What, have I the *art* to slip out of your hands again? 'Pardon me (as your old friend says) for being jocular.'

20. You add, *(altius insurgens,)* "But it is a considerable offence to charge another wrongfully, and contradict himself about the doctrine of assurance." To prove this upon me, you bring my own words. 'The assurance we preach, is of quite another kind from that Mr. Bedford writes against. We speak of an assurance of our present pardon; not, as he does, of our final perseverance,' (Third Journal, Vol. I. p. 345.) "Mr. Wesley might have considered (you say) that when they talk of *assurance of pardon and salvation*, the world will extend the meaning of the words, to our eternal state." I do consider it, Sir. And therefore I never use that phrase either in preaching or writing. "Assurance of pardon and salvation" is an expression that never comes out of my lips. And if Mr. Whitefield does use it, yet he does not *preach* such an assurance, as the privilege of all Christians.

"But Mr. Wesley himself says, that though a 'full assurance of faith doth not necessarily imply a full assurance of our future perseverance,' yet 'some have both the one and the other.' And now what becomes of his charge against Mr. Bedford? And is it not mere evasion to say afterwards, 'This is not *properly* an assurance of what is *future?*'" Sir, this *argument presses* me very *hard!* May I not be allowed a little *evasion* now? Come, for once I will try to do without it, and to answer flat and plain.

And I answer, 1. That *faith* is one thing; the *full assurance of faith* another: 2. That even the full assurance of faith, does not imply the full assurance of perseverance. This bears another name; being styled by St. Paul, *The full assurance of hope.* 3. Some Christians have only the first of these, They have faith; but mixed with doubts and fears. Some have also the full assurance of faith; a full conviction of *present* pardon: and yet not the full assurance of hope; not a full conviction of their future perseverance. 4. The faith which we preach, as necessary to all Christians, is the

first of these, and no other. Therefore, 5. It is no evasion at all to say, 'This (the faith which we preach as necessary to all Christians) is not *properly* an assurance of what is future.' And consequently, my charge against Mr. Bedford stands good, 'That his sermon on assurance, is an *ignoratio elenchi*, (an ignorance of the point in question,) from beginning to end.' Therefore neither do I "charge another *wrongfully*, nor *contradict myself*, about the doctrine of assurances."

21. To prove my "*art, cunning*, and *evasion*," you instance next in the case of *impulses* and *impressions*. You begin, "With what pertinacious confidence, have impulses, impressions, feelings, &c. been advanced into certain rules of conduct? Their followers have been taught to depend upon them, as sure guides and infallible proofs." To support this weighty charge, you bring one single scrap, about a line and a quarter from one of my Journals. The words are these; 'By the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced.' Convinced of what? It immediately follows, 'Of unbelief, having no such faith, as will prevent my heart from being troubled.'

I here assert, that inward feeling or consciousness, is the most infallible of proofs, of unbelief, of the want of such a faith, as will prevent the heart's being troubled. But do I here "advance impressions, impulses, feelings, &c. into certain rules of conduct?" Or any where else? You may just as well say, I advance them into certain proofs of transubstantiation. Neither in writing, nor in private conversation, have I ever "taught any of my followers, to depend upon them as sure guides or infallible proofs" of any thing.

Nay, you yourself own, I have taught quite the reverse: and that at my very first setting out. Then, as well as ever since, I have told the societies, 'They were not to judge by their own inward feelings. I warned them, all these were in themselves of a doubtful, disputable nature. They might be from God, or they might not, and were therefore to be tried by a further rule, to be brought to the only cer-

tain test, the Law and the Testimony,' Third Journal, Vol. I. p. 390.

This is what I have taught from first to last. And now, Sir, what becomes of your heavy charge? On which side lies the "pertinacious confidence" now? How clearly have you made out, my "inconsistency and self-contradiction!" And that I "occasionally either defend or give up, my favourite notions and principal points?"

22. "Inspiration and the extraordinary calls and guidances of the Holy Ghost, are what you next affirm to be given up," (p. 106, &c.) Not by me. I do not *give up* one tittle on this head, which I ever maintained. But observe. Before you attempt to prove my *giving them up*, you are to prove, that I laid claim to them: that I laid claim to some *extraordinary* inspiration, call, or guidance of the Holy Ghost. You say, "My concessions on this head (to Mr. Church) are ambigious and evasive." Sir, you mistake the fact, I make no concessions at all, either to him or you. I give up nothing that ever I advanced on this head. But when Mr. Church charged me with what I did not advance, I replied, 'I claim no other *direction of God's*, but what is common to all believers. I pretend to be no otherwise inspired, than you are, if you love God.' Where is the ambiguity, or evasion in this? I meant it for a flat denial of the charge.

23. Your next section, *Spirat tragicum satis*, charges the Methodists; "with scepticism and infidelity, with doubts and denials of the truth of revelation, and atheism itself," (p. 110, &c.) The passages brought from my Journals to prove this charge, which you have prudently transposed, I beg leave to consider in the same order, as they stand there. First Journ. Vol. I. p. 194.) The first, you preface thus: "Upon the people's ill usage (or supposed ill usage) of Mr. Wesley in Georgia, and their speaking of all manner of evil, falsely (as he says) against him; and trampling under foot the word, after having been very attentive to it: what an emotion in him is hereby raised!" 'I do hereby

bear witness against myself, that I could scarcely refrain from giving the lie to experience, and reason, and Scripture, all together.' The passage, as I wrote it, stands thus: 'Sunday, March 7. I entered upon my ministry, at Savannah. In the second lesson, Luke 18, was our Lord's prediction of the treatment which he himself, and consequently his followers, were to meet with from the world.'

'Yet notwithstanding these plain declarations of our Lord, notwithstanding my own repeated experience, notwithstanding the experience of all the sincere followers of Christ, whom I ever talked with, read, or heard of, nay, and the reason of the thing, evincing to a demonstration, that all who love not the light, must hate him who is continually labouring to pour it in upon them: I do here bear witness against myself, that when I saw the number of people crowding into the church, the deep attention with which they received the word, and the seriousness that afterwards sat on all their faces: I could scarcely refrain from giving the lie to experience, and reason, and Scripture, all together. I could hardly believe, that the greater, the far greater part of this attentive, serious people, would hereafter trample under foot that word, and say all manner of evil falsely of him that spoke it.'

Sir, does this prove me guilty of scepticism, or infidelity? Of doubting or denying the truth of revelation? Did I speak this, "upon the people's using me ill, and saying all manner of evil against me? Or am I here describing any emotion raised in me hereby? Blush, blush, Sir, if you *can* blush. You had here no possible room for mistakes. You grossly and wilfully falsify the whole passage, to support a groundless, shameless accusation.

24. The second passage (written January 24, 1737-8) is this, 'In a storm I think, What if the gospel be not true? Then thou art of all men most foolish. For what hast thou given thy goods, thy ease, thy friends, thy reputation, thy country, thy life? For what art thou wandering over the face of the earth? A dream? A cunningly-devised fable?'

I am here describing the thoughts which passed through my mind, when I was confessedly an unbeliever. But even this implies no scepticism, much less atheism; no "denial of the truth of revelation:" but barely such transient doubts as I presume may assault any thinking man that knows not God.

The third passage (which you tack to the former, as if they were one and the same) runs thus. "I have not such a peace as excludes the possibility either of doubt or fear. When holy men have told me, I had no faith, I have often doubted whether I had or not? And those doubts have made me very uneasy, till I was relieved by prayer and the holy Scriptures," Third Journal, Vol. I. p. 348.

Speak frankly, Sir, does this prove me guilty of scepticism, infidelity, or atheism? What else does it prove? Just nothing at all but the "pertinacious confidence" of him that cites it.

25. You recite more at large one passage more. The whole paragraph stands thus.

"St. Paul tells us, 'the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance,' (Ibid.) Now although by the grace of God in Christ, I find a measure of some of these in myself, viz. of peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance; yet others I find not. I cannot find in myself the love of God or Christ. Hence my deadness and wanderings in public prayer. Hence it is, that even in the holy communion, I have rarely any more than a cold attention. Hence when I hear of the highest instance of God's love, my heart is still senseless and unaffected. Yea, at this moment (Oct. 14, 1738) I feel no more love to him, than one I had never heard of."

To any who knew something of inward religion I should have observed, that this is what serious divines mean by *desertion*. But all expressions of this kind are jargon to you. So allowing it to be whatever you please, I ask only, Do you know how long I continued in this state? How many years, months, weeks, or days? If not, how can you

infer, what my state of mind is now, from what it was above eleven years ago?

Sir, I do not tell you or any man else, that 'I cannot *now* find the love of God in myself:' or that *now*, in the year 1751, 'I rarely feel more than a cold attention in the holy communion.' So that your whole argument, built on this supposition, falls to the ground at once.

26. Sensible, I presume of the weakness of this reason, ou immediately apply to the passions, by that artful remark, "Observe, reader, this is the man, who charges our religion, as no better than the Turkish pilgrimages to Mecca, or the Popish worship of our Lady of Loretto!" "Our religion!" How naturally will the reader suppose, that I fix the charge either on the Protestant religion in general, or on that of the Church of England in particular! But how far is this from the truth!

My words concerning those who are commonly called religious, are, 'Wherein does their religion consist? In righteousness and true holiness? In love stronger than death? Fervent gratitude to God, and tender affection to all his creatures? Is their religion the religion of the heart? A renewal of the soul in the image of God? Do they resemble him they worship? Are they free from pride, from vanity, from malice, from envy? From ambition and avarice, from passion and lust, from every uneasy and unlovely temper? Alas! I fear neither they (the greater part at least) nor you have any more notion of this religion, than the peasant that holds the plough, of the religion of a Gymnosophist,' Farther Appeal, Third Part.

'It is well if the genuine religion of Christ, has any more alliance with what you call religion, than with the Turkish pilgrimages to Mecca, or the Popish worship of our Lady of Loretto. Have not you substituted in the place of the religion of the heart, something (I do not say, equally sinful, but) equally vain and foreign to the worshipping of God in spirit and in truth? What else can be said even of prayer, public or private, in the manner wherein *you* generally perform it? As a thing of course, running round and

round, in the same dull track, without either the knowledge or the love of God? Without one heavenly temper, either attained or improved?'

Now, Sir, what room is there for your "own exclamations, What sort of heavenly temper is his? How can he possibly, consistently with charity, call this our general performance?" Sir, I do not, I only appeal to the conscience of *you*, (and each particular reader) whether this is, or is not, the manner wherein *you* (in the singular number) *generally* perform public or private prayer. "How possibly, without being omniscient, can he affirm, that *we* (I presume you mean all the members of our church) pray without one heavenly temper? Or know any thing at all of our private devotions? How monstrous is all this!" Recollect yourself, Sir. If your terror is real, you are more afraid than hurt. I do not affirm any such thing. I do not take upon me, to know, any thing at all of your private devotions. But I suppose, I may inquire, without offence, and beg you seriously to examine yourself before God.

So you have brought no one proof, "That scepticism, infidelity, and atheism, are either constituent parts or genuine consequences of Methodism." Therefore your florid declamation in the following pages, is entirely out of its place. And you might have spared yourself the trouble of accounting for what has no being, but in your own imagination.

27. You charge the Methodists next, with "an uncharitable spirit," (p. 115, &c.) All you advance in proof of this, as if it were from my writings, but without naming either page or book, I have nothing to do with. But whatever you tell me where to find, I shall carefully consider.

I observe but one single passage of this sort. And that you have worn thread-bare already. "By the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced—of levity and luxuriancy of spirit—by speaking words not tending to edify; but most by my manner of speaking of my enemies." Sir, you may print this, not only in italics, but in capitals, and yet it would do you no service. For what I was con-

vinced of then was not uncharitableness, but as I expressly mentioned, "levity of spirit."

28. Of the same "uncharitable nature," (p. 119, &c.) you say, is "their application of divine judgments to their opposers." You borrow two instances from Mr. Church. But you omit the answers, which I shall therefore subjoin.

His words are, "You describe heaven as executing judgments, immediate punishments, on those who oppose you. You say, 'Mr. Molther was taken ill this day. I believe it was the hand of God that was upon him.'" I do. But I do not say, as a judgment for opposing *me*. That *you* say for me. First letter to Mr. Church.

Again, you mention, says Mr. Church, as an "awful providence, the case of a poor wretch, who was last week cursing and blaspheming, and had boasted to many, that he would come on Sunday, and no man should stop his mouth —but on Friday, God laid his hand upon him, and on Sunday he was buried." I do look on this as a manifest judgment of God, on a hardened sinner, for his complicated wickedness.

To repeat these objections, without taking the least notice of the answers, is one of the usual proofs of your charitable spirit.

29. You pass on to "the Methodist's uncharitable custom of summoning their opponents to the bar of judgment," p. 123, &c.

You bring two passages from my writings to prove this. The first is, "Calling at Newgate, (in Bristol,) I was informed, that the poor wretches under sentence of death, were earnestly desirous to speak with me; but that alderman Beecher had sent an express order, that they should not. I cite alderman B. to answer *for these souls*, at the judgment seat of Christ." Why do you leave out those words, *for these souls?* Because they shew the sentence means neither more nor less, than "if *these souls* perish, he, not I, must answer for them at the great day."

The second passage is still more wide from the point. The whole of it is as follows.

"I have often inquired, (Third Journal, Vol. I. p. 405,) Who were the authors of such report, (that I was a Papist,) and have generally found, they were either bigotted dissenters, or (I speak it without fear or favour) ministers of our own church. I have also frequently considered, what possible ground or motive they could have thus to speak: seeing few men in the world have had occasion so clearly and openly to declare their principles, as I have done both by preaching, printing, and conversation, for several years last past. And I can no otherwise think, than that either they spoke thus (to put the most favourable construction upon it) from gross ignorance; they knew not what Popery was: they knew not what doctrines these are which the Papists teach: or they wilfully spoke what they knew to be false, probably thinking thereby to do God service. Now take this to yourselves, whoever ye are, high or low, dissenters or churchmen, clergy or laity, who have advanced this shameless charge, and digest it how you can.'

'But how have ye not been afraid, if ye believe there is a God, and that he knoweth the secrets of your hearts, (I speak now to you preachers, more especially, of whatever denomination) to declare so gross, so palpable a lie, in the name of the God of truth? I cite you all *before the Judge of all the earth*, either publickly to prove your charge; or by publickly retracting it, to make the best amends you can, to God, to me, and to the world.'

Sir, Do I here "summon my opponents *to the bar of judgment?*" So you would make me do, by quoting only that scrap. "I cite you all before the Judge of all the earth!" You then add, with equal charity and sincerity, "Here you have the true spirit of an enthusiast, flushed with a modest assurance of his own salvation, and the charitable prospect of the damnation of others." O Sir, never name modesty more!

Here end your laboured attempts to shew the uncharitable spirit of the Methodists; who, for any thing you have shewn to the contrary, may be the most charitable people under the sun.

30. You charge the Methodists next "with violation and contempt of order and authority," namely the authority of the governors of the church. I have answered every article of this charge, in the second and third parts of the Farther Appeal, and the letter to Mr. Church. When you have been so good as to reply to what is there advanced, I may possibly say something more.

What you offer of *your own* upon this head, I shall consider without delay.

"Women and boys are actually employed in this ministry of public preaching." Please to tell me where? I know them not, nor ever heard of them before.

You add, what is more marvellous still, "I speak from *personal knowledge*, that sometimes, a little before delivering of the elements at the communion, three or four Methodists together will take it into their heads to go away: that sometimes while the sentences of the offertory were reading, they have called out to the minister who carried the bason, reproaching him for asking alms of them: that sometimes when the minister has delivered the bread into their hands, instead of eating it, they would slip it into their pockets." Sir, you must shew your face, before these stories will find credit on your bare asseveration.

"Yet they are surprised," you say, "that every man in his senses, don't without the least hesitation *join* them." Sir, I am surprised (unless you are not in your senses) at your advancing such a barefaced falsehood.

31. You go on. "Under this head may not improperly be considered, their undutiful behaviour to the *civil powers*." What proof have you of this? Why a single sentence, on which I laid so little stress myself, that it is only inserted by way of parenthesis, in the body of another sentence. 'Ye learned in the law, what becomes of Magna Charta, and of English liberty and property? Are not these mere sounds, while on any pretence, there is such a thing as a *press-gang* suffered in the land?'

Upon this you descant: "The legislature has at several times made acts for pressing men. But no matter for this:

touch but a Methodist, and all may perish, rather than a soldier be pressed. He who had before bound himself not to speak a tittle of worldly things, is now bawling for liberty and property." (Very lively this!) But I hope, Sir, you do not offer it by way of *argument*. You are not so unlearned in the law, as not to know, that the legislature is out of the question. The legislature six years ago did not appoint *press-gangs*, but legal officers, to press men. Consequently this is no proof (and find another if you can) of our *undutiful behaviour* to the *civil powers*.

32. "Another natural consequence," (you say) "of Methodism, is their mutual *jealousies* and *envyings*, their manifold *divisions, fierce and rancorous quarrels*, and accusation of one another." I shall carefully attend whatever you produce on this head. And if you will prove this, I will grant you all the rest.

You first cite those words: 'Musing on the things that were past, and reflecting how many that came after me, were preferred before me, I opened my testament on those words, 'The Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness; but Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, have not attained to the law of righteousness." And how does this prove the manifold *divisions* and *rancorous quarrels* of the Methodists?

Your second argument is, (Sect. 19, p. 341, &c.) 'Mr. Whitefield told me, he and I preached two different gospels: (his meaning was, that he preached particular, and I universal redemption,) and, therefore, he would not join with me, but publickly preach against me." Well, Sir, here was doubtless a *division* for a time; but no *fierce and rancorous quarrel* yet.

You say, thirdly, "They write and publish against each other." True; but without any degree either of *fierceness* or *rancour*.

You assert, fourthly, "Mr. Wesley in his sermon on *Free-Grace*, opposes the other for the horrible blasphemies of his horrible doctrine." Sir, away with your flourishes and write plain English. I opposed the doctrine of pre-

destination which he held. But without any degree either of *rancour* or *fiereeness*. Still therefore you miss the mark.

You quote fifthly these words; 'I spent an hour with Mr. Stonehouse. O what πιθανολογια, (persuasiveness of speech) is here! Surely all the deceivableness of unrighteousness.' (Fourth Journal, Vol. II. p. 55.) But there was no *fierceness* or *rancour* on either side. The passage, a fragment of which you produce as a sixth argument, stands thus, 'A few of us had a long conference together. Mr. C. now told me plainly, he could not agree with me, because I did not preach the truth, particularly with regard to election,' (Ibid. p. 58.) He did so; but without any rancour. We had a long conference: but not a *fierce* one.

You, seventhly, observe, "What scurrility of language the Moravians throw out against Mr. Wesley." Perhaps so. But this will not prove, that "the Methodists quarrel with each other."

"And how does he turn their own artillery upon them?" This is your eighth argument. But if I do, this no more proves the "*mutual quarrels* of the Methodists," than my turning your own artillery upon *you*.

34. Having by these eight irrefragable arguments, clearly carried the day, you raise your crest, and cry out, "Is this Methodism?

'And reign such mortal feuds in heavenly minds?'

Truly, Sir, you have not yet brought one single proof (and yet I dare say, you have brought the very best you have) of any such feuds among the Methodists, as may not be found among the most heavenly minded men on earth.

But you are resolved to pursue your victory, and so go on: "What are we to think of these charges, of Whitefield and Wesley, and the Moravians, one against another?" The Moravians, Sir, are out of the question: for they are no Methodists. And as to the rest, Mr. Whitefield charges Mr. Wesley with holding universal redemption, and I charge him with holding particular redemption. This is the standing charge on either side. And now, Sir, what

are we to think? Why, that you have not proved one point of this charge against the Methodists.

However, you stumble on. "Are these things so? Are they true, or are they not true? If not true, they are grievous *calumniators*; if true, they are detestable *sectarists*. Whether true or false, the allegation stands good, of their *fierce* and *rancorous quarrels*, and mutual *heinous accusations*."

Sir, has your passion quite extinguished your reason? Have *fierceness* and *rancour* left you no understanding? Otherwise how is it possible you should run on at this senseless, shameless rate? These things *are true* which Mr. Whitefield and Wesley object to each other. He holds the decrees; I do not. Yet this does not prove us, "detestable sectarists." And whether these things are true or false, your "allegation of our *fierce* and *rancorous quarrels*, and mutual *heinous accusations*" cannot stand good, without better proof than you have yet produced.

34. Yet with the utmost confidence, *quasi re bene gesta*, you proceed, "And how stands the matter among their disciples? They are *all* together by the ears, embroiled and broken with unchristian quarrels and confusions."

How do you prove this? Why thus. "Mr. Wesley's Fourth Journal is mostly taken up, in enumerating their wrath, dissentions, and apostasies." No, Sir, not a tenth part of it: although it gives a full and explicit account of the greatest dissentions which ever were among them.

But to come to particulars. You first cite these words, "At Oxford but a few who had not forsaken them." My words are. 'Monday, Oct. 1, 1738, I rode to Oxford, and found a few who had not yet forsaken the assembling themselves together.' This is your first proof, "that the Methodists are *all* together by the ears." Your second is its very twin-brother. 'Tues. 2. I went to many who once heard the word with joy; but when the sun arose, they withered away.' (Third Journal, Vol. I. p. 415.

Your third is this. 'Many were induced (by the Mo-

mavians) to deny the gift of God, and affirm, they never had any faith at all.' You are at liberty to enjoy this argument also: and let it prove what it can prove.

You, fourthly, cite these words. 'Many of our sisters are shaken, grievously torn by reasonings. But few come to Fetter-lane, and then after their names are called over they presently depart. Our brethren here (those who were proselytes to the Moravians) have neither wisdom enough to guide, nor prudence enough to let it alone. They (the Moravians) have much confounded some of our sisters, and many of our brothers are much grieved.'

This proves thus much, that *one* society was *at that time* divided; but not "that the Methodists, in general, were" even *then*, "*all* together by the ears."

The passage you quote in the fifth place, is, 'I believe —are determined to go on according to Mr. Molther's direction, and I suppose, (says the writer of the letter,) above half our brethren are on their side. But they are so very confused, they do not know how to go on, and yet are unwilling to be taught, except by the Moravians.'—(Fourth Journal, Vol. II. p. 15.)

Add to this, (I recite the whole passages in order: not as you had mangled, and then jumbled them together:) 'Wednesday, Dec. 19. I came to London, though with a heavy heart. Here I found every day the dreadful effects of our brethren's reasoning and disputing with each other. Scarce one in ten retained his first love: and most of the rest were in the utmost confusion,' (they were so more or less, for several months,) biting and devouring one another.'

This also proves so much, neither more nor less, that *some* of the Methodists were then in confusion. And just so much is proved by your sixth quotation. 'Many were wholly unsettled (by the Moravians, taking advantage of my absence) and lost in vain reasonings and doubtful disputations:—Not likely to come to any true foundation,' (Ibid. p. 16.)

Your seventh quotation, (I recite the whole sentence,)

runs thus. 'April 19. I received a letter—informing me, that our poor brethren at Fetter-lane, were again in great confusion.' This quotation proves just as much as the preceding: or as the following. 'The plague (of false stillness) was now spread to them also—namely to the little society at Islington.' (Ibid. p. 30.)

Your ninth is this: 'I went to the society, but I found their hearts were quite estranged. Frid. 4. I met a little handful of them, who still stand in the old paths.'

Thus far you have been speaking of the Methodists in London. And what have you proved concerning them? Only that the Moravians mixing with them twelve years ago, while they were young and unexperienced, set them a disputing with each other, and thereby occasioned much confusion for several months. But you have not proved, That "the Methodists in general were," even then, "*all* together by the ears:" and much less, that they have been so *ever since*, and that they are so *now*.

35. I now attend you to Kingswood. Not to "Bristol and Kingswood," which you artfully join together. The society at Bristol was no more concerned with the disputes in Kingswood, than with those in London.

Here the first quotation, though containing but two lines, is extracted from three different paragraphs; in one of which I say, (Ibid. p. 57.) 'I had many unpleasing accounts (in December, 1740) concerning our little society in Kingswood:' in the second, 'I went to Kingswood, if haply I might repair the breaches which had been made,' (by the Predestinarian preachers:) in the third 'I laboured to heal the jealousies and misunderstandings which had arisen.'

The second passage, part of which you quote, is this: 'I returned early in the morning to Kingswood. But my congregation was gone to hear Mr. C. So that I had not above two or three men and as many women,' ibid. p. 59.

The third is, 'January 1. I explained, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*' (ibid. p. 60.) But many of our brethren had no ears to hear, having disputed away both their faith and love.'

The fourth: 'February 21. I inquired concerning the divisions and offences which began afresh to break out in Kingswood. In the afternoon I met a few of the bands; but it was a cold, uncomfortable meeting.' Fourth Journal, p. 65.

You have picked out here and there a word from several pages, in order to furnish a fifth quotation. The most material part of it is this: Sat. 28. I read the following paper at Kingswood; "For their scoffing at the word and ministers of God, for their backbiting and evil-speaking, I—declare the persons above-mentioned, to be no longer members of this society,' ibid. p. 67.

'And we had great reason to bless God, that after fifty-two were withdrawn, we had still upwards of ninety left,' p. 69.

Who those other "forty were that," you say, "left them," I know not. Perhaps you may inform me.

Upon the whole, all these quotations prove only this: that about eleven years ago, Mr. C. falling into predestination, set the society in Kingswood a disputing with each other, and occasioned much confusion for some months. But still you have not gone one step toward proving (which is the one point in question) "That the Methodists in general were" even then, "*all* together by the ears;" and much less, "that they have been so ever since, and that they *are* so *now*."

However you fail not to triumph (like Louis le Grand, after his victory at Blenheim,) "What shall we say now? Are these the fruits of Methodism?" No, Sir. They are the fruits of opposing it. They are the tares sown among the wheat. You may hear of instances of the same kind, both in earlier and later ages.

You add, "This is bad enough; but it is not the worst. For consider what becomes of those that leave them?" Why, Sir, what if 'their last end be worse than their first?' Will you charge this upon *me*? By the same rule you must have charged upon the apostles themselves, whatever befell any of those who having 'known the way of righteousness,'

afterwards turned back from the holy commandment once delivered to them.'

36. You conclude this section, "Mr. Wesley will probably say, 'Must I be answerable for the Moravians, against whom I have preached and written?' True, since he and the Moravians quarrelled. But who gives them a box on the ear with the one hand, and embraces them with the other? Who first brought over this wicked generation? Who made a Moravian his spiritual guide? Who fanaticised his own followers, and deprived them of their senses? Whose societies (by his own confession) run over in shoals to Moravianism, forty or fifty at a time? Would they have split upon this rock, if they had not been first Methodists? Lastly, Where is the spawn of Moravianism so strongly working, as in the children of Methodism?"

Sir, you run very fast. And yet I hope to overtake you by and by. "Mr. Wesley," you say, "has preached against the Moravians, since he quarrelled with them." Sir, I never quarrelled with their persons yet. I did with some of their tenets long ago. He "gives them a box on the ear with the one hand, and embraces them with the other." That is, I embrace what is good among them, and at the same time reprove what is evil. "Who *first* brought over this wicked generation?" Not I, whether they be wicked or not. I once thought I did; but have since then seen and acknowledged my mistake. "Who made a Moravian his spiritual guide?" Not I: though I have occasionally consulted several. Who *fanaticised* his own followers, and deprived them of their senses?" Not I. Prove it upon me if you can. "Whose societies (by his own confession) run over in shoals to Moravianism, forty or fifty at a time?" Truly not mine. Two and fifty of Kingswood society ran over to Calvinism, and a year before, part of Fetter-lane society gradually went over to the Moravians. But I know none of ours that went over "in shoals." They never, that I remember, gained five at a time: nor fifty in all (to the best of my knowledge) for these last ten years. "Would they (of Fetter-lane) have split on this rock, if they had not first been Methodists." Undoubtedly they would; for

several of them had not first been Methodists, Mr. Viney, for instance (as well as several others) was with the Germans, before ever he saw me. "Lastly, Where is the spawn of Moravianism working so strongly as in the children of Methodism?" If you mean the errors of Moravianism, they are not working at all in the generality of the children of Methodism: the Methodists in general being thoroughly apprised of, and fully guarded against them.

So much for your modest assertion, "That the *Methodists in general*, are *all* together by the ears:" the very reverse of which is true. They are, *in general*, in perfect peace. They enjoy in themselves the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. They are at peace with each other. And as much as lieth in them, they live peaceably with all men.

37. Your next charge is, "That Methodism has a tendency to undermine morality and good works," (p. 146, &c.) To prove this you assert, "1. That the Methodists are trained up to wait in quietness for sudden conversion; whence they are naturally led, to neglect *the means of salvation*." This is a mistake all over. For neither are they taught to wait in quietness (if you mean any more than patience by that term) for either sudden or gradual conversion: neither do they, in fact, neglect *the means*. So far from it, that they are eminently exact in the use of them.

You assert, 2. "The doctrine of assurance of pardon and salvation, present and future, causes a false security, to the neglect of future endeavours." Blunder upon blunder again. That all Christians have an assurance of *future salvation*, is no Methodist doctrine: and an assurance of present pardon, is so far from causing negligence, that it is of all others the strongest motive to vigorous endeavours after universal holiness.

You assert, 3. "Impulses and impressions, being made the rule of duty, will lead into dangerous errors." Very true. But the Methodists do not make impulses and impressions the rule of duty. They totally disclaim any other rule of duty, than the written word.

You assert, 4, "A claim of unsinning perfection," (I mean by perfection, the loving God with all our heart) "drives some into phrensies, others into despair." Sir, I doubt the fact.

You assert, 5, "The Moravian Methodists trample down morality, and multitudes of the Wesleyans have been infected." The *Moravian Methodists!* You may as well say the *Presbyterian Papists*. The Moravians have no connexion with the Methodists. Therefore whatever they do (though you slander them too) they and not we are to answer for. The Methodists, at present, blessed be God, are as little infected with this plague of condemning or neglecting good works) as any body of people in England or Ireland.

38. From these loose assertions you proceed to quotations from my writings, every one of which I shall consider, to shew that not in one or two, but in every one you are a wilful prevaricator and false accuser of your neighbour.

You say, first, "The Moravians."—Hold, good Sir! You are out of the way already. You well know, the Moravians are to answer for themselves. Our present question concerns the Methodists only.

You say, secondly, "A general temptation prevails among the societies of Methodists, of leaving off good works," (Fourth Journal, p. 35.) Sir, you are wrong again. The societies of Methodists are not there spoken of: but the single society of Fetter-lane. Among these only that temptation *then* prevailed.

You quote, thirdly, as my words, "The poor, confused, shattered society, *had erred* from the faith." My own words are, 'I told the poor, confused, shattered society, *wherein they had erred* from the faith:" (ibid.) Namely, with regard to the ordinances: not in general, as your way of expressing it naturally imports. Nor had *all* the society erred even in this point. Many of them were still unshaken.

You quote, fourthly, "A woman of Deptford spoke great words and true. She ordered Mr. Humphreys to leave off doing good."

What then must every honest man think of you, when he observes, that one half of the sentence (which you thus artfully put together) stands in another page, and at a considerable distance from the other? And that I immediately subjoin to the latter clause, "we talked largely with her, and she was humbled to the dust, under a deep sense of the advantage Satan had gained over her."

You quote fifthly, a part of the following sentence, to prove that I "undermine morality and good works."

"His judgment concerning holiness is new. He no longer judges it to be an outward thing, to consist either in doing no harm, in doing good, or in using the ordinances of God." (And yet how strongly do I insist upon all these! Sir, do not you know this?) "He sees, it is the life of God in the soul, the image of God fresh stamped on the heart." It is so. Sir, can you deny it? What then will you prove by this?

You quote, sixthly, part of these words: "They speak of holiness, as if it consisted, chiefly if not wholly, in these two points, first, the doing no harm, secondly, the doing good (as it is called) i. e. the using the means of grace, and helping our neighbour," (Fourth Journal, p. 77.) And this you term "disparaging good works!" Sir, these things, considered barely as to the *opus operatum*, are not good works. There must be something good in the heart, before any of our works are good. Insomuch that, 'though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not' this, 'it profiteth me nothing.'

You observe, by the way, "the *Mystic Divinity* was once the Methodists' doctrine." Sir, you have stepped out of the way, only to get another fall. The Mystic divinity was never the Methodists' doctrine. They never could swallow either John Tauler or Jacob Behme: although they often advised with one that did.

39. You say, seventhly, "I do not find, that Mr. Wesley has ever cited those express passages of St. James." Sir, what if I had not? (I mean in print) I do not cite every text from Genesis to the Revelation. But it happens I

have. Look again, Sir; and by and by you may find where.

You say, eighthly, "Mr. Wesley affirms, that the condition of our justification, is faith alone and not good works." Most certainly I do. And I learned it from the 11th and 12th articles, and from the homilies of our Church. If you can confute them, do. But I subscribe to them, both with my hand and heart.

You say, ninthly, "Give me leave to make a remark. The Methodists wandered many years, in the new path of salvation by faith and works, which was the time too of their highest glory and popularity. During this time, they were seducing their disciples into the most destructive errors." Excuse me, Sir. While they preached salvation by faith and works, they had no disciples at all; unless you term a few pupils such) nor had they any popularity at all. They then enjoyed (what they always desired) a quiet, retired life. But whatever disciples we had, they were not "seduced by us into" the error of justification by works. For they were in it, before ever they saw our face, or knew there were such men in the world.

You say, tenthly, "Mr. Wesley only contends, that it is *possible* to *use* them without *trusting* in them." Not in that page; because the proposition I am confuting is, 'It is *not possible to use* them, without *trusting* in them,' Fourth Journal, p. 16.

You added, "And now, are not such disparaging expressions (a *mere possibility of using* them, without *trusting* in them) a great discouragement to practice?" O Sir, when will you deviate into truth? Dare you affirm, without any regard to God or man, "Mr. Wesley only contends for a *mere possibility* of using the means, without trusting in them?"

To go no farther than the very first page you refer to, (ibid.) my express words are these:

'I believe the way to attain faith is, to wait for Christ, in using all the means of grace.'

'Because I believe these do ordinarily convey God's

grace (even) to unbelievers.' Is this "contending only for a *mere possibility* of *using* them without *trusting* in them?"

Not only in this, and many other parts of the Journals, but in a sermon written professedly on the subject, I contend, that all the ordinances of God are the stated channels of his grace to man; and that it is our bounden duty to use them all, at all possible opportunities. So that to charge the Methodists in general, or me in particular, with undervaluing or disparaging them, shews just as much regard for justice and truth, as if you were to charge us with Mahometanism.

40. Tedious as it is to wade through so many dirty pages, I will follow you, step by step, a little farther. Your eleventh proof that we "undermine morality and good works," is drawn from the following passage: 'I know every one *under the law* is even as I was, for near twice ten years. Every one, when he begins to see his fallen state, and to feel the wrath of God abiding on him, relapses into the sin that most easily besets him, *soon after* repenting of it. Sometimes he avoids, and at many other times he cannot persuade himself to avoid the occasions of it. Hence his relapses are frequent, and of consequence his heart is hardened more and more. Nor can he, with all his sincerity, avoid any one of these four marks of hypocrisy, till *being justified by faith*, he *hath peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*' Third Journal, Vol. I. p. 409.

You, Sir, are no competent judge in the cause. But to any one who has experienced what St. Paul speaks in his seventh chapter to the Romans, I willingly submit this whole question. *You* know by experience, that if anger was the sin that did so easily beset you, you relapsed into it (for days, or months, or years) *soon after* repenting of it. Sometimes you avoided the occasions of it: at other times you did not. Hence your relapses were frequent, and your heart was hardened more and more. And yet all this time you were sincerely striving against sin, you could say, without hypocrisy, *The thing which I do, I allow not; the*

evil which I would not, that I do. To will is even now present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.

But the Jesuits, you think, "could scarcely have granted salvation upon easier terms. Have no fear, ye Methodists." Sir, I do not grant salvation (as you call it) upon so easy terms. I believe a man in this state, is in a state of damnation. "Have no fear!" say you? Yea, but those who are thus *under the law*, are in fear all the day long. "Was there ever so pleasing a scheme?" Pleasing with a vengeance! As pleasing as to be in the belly of hell. So totally do you mistake the whole matter, 'not knowing what *you* speak, nor whereof *you* affirm.'

You are indeed somewhat pitiable in speaking wrong on this head, because you do it in ignorance. But this plea cannot be allowed, when you gravely advance that trite, thread-bare objection concerning the Lord's Supper, without taking any notice, that I have answered it again and again, both to Mr. Church and to the late Lord Bishop of London.

41. Your thirteenth proof is this: "Mr. Wesley has taught us, that infirmities are no sins." Sir, you have taught me to wonder at nothing you assert: else I should wonder at this. The words, I suppose you refer to, stand, in *The Sermon on Salvation by Faith;* (though you do not choose, for a plain reason, to shew your reader where they may be found.) 'He that is by faith born of God sinneth not; 1. By any habitual sin; nor, 2. By any wilful sin; nor, 3. By any sinful desire; for he continually desireth the holy and perfect will of God; nor, 4. Doth he sin by infirmities, whether in act, word, or thought. For his infirmities have no concurrence of his will, and without this, they are not properly sins.' And this you seriously declare, "is a loop-hole to creep out of every moral and religious obligation!"

In the same paragraph you say, I have strongly affirmed, that "all our works and tempers are evil continually: that our whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable, and consequently our whole life, (First Journal, Vol. I, p. 250;)

all our works, the most specious of them, our righteousness, our prayers, needing an atonement themselves," Second Journal, p. 273.) I do strongly affirm this. But of whom? In all these places, but the last, of myself only. In every one, but this, I speak in the singular number, and of myself, when confessedly an unbeliever. And of whom do I speak in that last place? Of unbelievers, and them only. The words are, 'All our tempers and works, in our natural state, are only evil continually.'

Now, Sir, where is *your* "loop-hole to creep out?" If you have none, I fear every impartial man will pass sentence upon you, that you have no regard either to "moral or religious obligations."

I have now weighed every argument you have brought, to prove "that the Methodists undermine morality and good works." A grievous charge indeed! But the more inexcusable is he, who advances it, but is not able to make it good, in any one single instance. Pardon my pertness, Sir, in not barely affirming (that is *your* manner) but proving this: nay, and in telling you, that you cannot make amends to God, to me, or to the world, without a retraction as public as your calumny.

42. You add, "How the case stands in fact, as to the number of converts among the Methodists, and real reformation of life to the certain and known duties of the gospel, is matter of difficult determination." Not at all. What is easier to be determined, than 1. That A. B. of Exeter or Tiverton, was for many years a notorious drunkard, common swearer, or sabbath-breaker? 2. That he is not so now; that he is "really reformed" from drunkenness, swearing, sabbath-breaking, to sobriety, and the other "certain and known duties of the gospel?"

"But from what inquiry you can make, there is no reason to think them, for the generality, better than their neighbours." Better than their neighbours! Why are they no worse than their neighbours? Then what have you been doing all this time? But whether they are better or worse than their neighbours, they are undeniably better than

themselves: I mean, better than they were before they heard this preaching, in the "certain and known duties of the gospel." But you desire us to "consider their black art of calumny; their uncharitableness; their excessive pride and vanity; their scepticism, doubts, and disbelief of God and Christ; their disorderly practices and contempt of authority; their bitter envying and inveterate broils among themselves; their coolness for good works." Sir, we will consider all these, when you have proved them. Till then, this is mere *brutum fulmen*.

43. You proceed. "If we take Mr. Wesley's own account, it falls very short of any considerable reformation." You mean; if we take *that part* of his account, which you are pleased to transcribe. *Atticam elegantiam!* But let any impartial man read my whole account, and then judge. However hence you infer, that "the new reformers have made but a slow and slight progress in the reformation of manners." As a full answer to this, I need only transcribe a page or two from the last Appeal.

'God begins a glorious work in our land. You set yourself against it with your might; to prevent its beginning where it does not yet appear, and to destroy it wherever it does. In part you prevail. You keep many from hearing the word that is able to save their souls. Others who have heard it, you induce to turn back from God, and to list under the devil's banner again. Then you make the success of your own wickedness an excuse for not acknowledging the work of God! You urge, "That not *many* sinners were reformed! And that some of those are now as bad as ever?"

'Whose fault is this? Is it ours? Or your own? Why have not thousands more been reformed? Yea, for every one who is now turned to God, why are there not ten thousand? Because you and your associates laboured so heartily in the cause of hell: because you and they spared no pains, either to prevent or to destroy the work of God. By using all the power and wisdom you had, you hindered thousands from hearing the gospel, which they might have

found to be the power of God unto salvation. Their blood is upon your heads. By inventing, or countenancing, or retailing lies, some refined, some gross and palpable, you hindered others from profiting by what they did hear. *You* are answerable to God for these souls also. Many who began to taste the good word and run the way of God's commandments, by various methods you prevailed on to hear it no more. So they soon drew back to perdition. But know, that for every one of these also, God will require an account of *you* in the day of judgment!

'And yet in spite of all the malice, and wisdom, and strength, not only of men, but 'of principalities and powers,' of the 'rulers of the darkness of this world,' of the 'wicked spirits in high places;' there are thousands found, who are 'turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God.' What a harvest then might we have seen before now, if all who say they are 'on the Lord's side,' had come, as in all reason they ought, 'to the help of the Lord against the mighty?' Yea, had they only not opposed the work of God, had they only refrained from his messengers, might not the trumpet of God have been heard long since, in every corner of our land? And thousands of sinners in every county, been brought to fear God and honour the king?''

44. Without any regard to this, your next assertion is, That the Methodists are "carrying on the work of popery," (Sect. 21, p. 164, &c.) This also being a charge of a very high nature, I shall particularly consider whatever you advance in defence of it.

Your first argument is, "They have a strain of Jesuitical sophistry, artifice, and craft, evasion, reserve, equivocation, and prevarication." So you *say*. But you do not so much as aim at any proof.

Your second argument is, "Mr. Wesley says, where a Methodist was receiving the sacrament, God was pleased to let him see a crucified Saviour." Sir, Mr. W. does not say this. It is one that occasionally wrote to him. But if he had, what would you infer? That he is a papist? Where is the consequence? Why, you say, "was not this as

good an argument for transubstantiation, as several produced by the papists?" Yes, exactly as good as either their arguments or yours. That is, just good for nothing.

Your third argument runs thus, "We may see in Mr. W.'s writings that he was once a strict churchman, but gradually put on a more catholic spirit, tending at length to Roman catholic. He rejects any design to convert others, from any communion; and consequently not from popery."

This is half true, (which is something uncommon with you,) and only half false. It is true, that for thirty years last past, I have "gradually put on a more catholic spirit," finding more and more tenderness for those who differed from me, either in opinions or modes of worship. But it is not true, that I "reject any design of converting others from any communion." I have by the blessing of God, converted several from popery, who are now alive and ready to testify it.

Your fourth argument is, That in a collection of prayers, I cite the words of an ancient liturgy, 'for the faithful departed.' Sir, whenever I use those words in the burial service, I pray to the same effect. 'That we, with all those who are departed in thy faith and fear, may have our perfect consummation of bliss, both in body and soul.' Yes, and whenever I say, 'Thy kingdom come;' for I mean both the kingdom of grace and glory. In this kind of general prayer, therefore, for the faithful departed, I conceive myself to be clearly justified, both by the earliest antiquity, by the Church of England, and by the Lord's prayer; although the Papists have corrupted this scriptural practice, into praying for those who die in their sins.

45. Your fifth argument is, that they use private confession, in which every one is to speak the state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, and answer as many searching questions as may be. And what a scene, say you, is hereby disclosed! What a filthy jakes opened, when the most searching questions are answered without reserve?" Hold, Sir, unless you are answering for yourself. This undoubtedly you have a right to do. You can

tell best what is in your heart. And I cannot deny what you say: it may be a very filthy jakes, for ought I know. But pray do not measure others by yourself. The hearts of believers 'are purified through faith.' When these open their hearts one to another, there is no such scene disclosed. Yet temptations to pride in various kinds, to self-will, to unbelief in many instances, they often feel in themselves (whether they give any place to them or no) and occasionally disclose to their brethren.

But this has no resemblance to Popish confession; of which you are very sensible. For you cite my own words: 'The Popish confession is the confession made by a single person to a priest. Whereas this is, the confession of several persons conjointly, not to a priest, but to each other.' You add, "Will Mr. W. abide by this, and freely answer a question?" I will. For I desire only 'by manifestation of the truth, to commend myself to every man's conscience, in the sight of God.'

Your question is, "After private confessions taken in their bands, are not *reports* made to Mr. W?" I answer, no: No *reports* are made to me, of the particulars mentioned in private bands. "Are no delinquents, male and female, *brought before him separately, and confessed* by him?" No: none at all. You ask, "How then do I know the outward and inward states of those under my care?" I answer, by examining them once a quarter, more or less, not separately, but ten or fifteen together. Therefore every unprejudiced person must see that there is no analogy between the Popish confession to a priest, and our 'confessing our faults one to another, and praying one for another,' as St. James directs. Consequently neither does this argument, though urged with all your art and force, amount to any shadow of proof, that "the Methodists are carrying on the work of popery."

46. Your sixth argument, such as it is, stands thus. "Another tendency to Popery appears, by the notion of 'a single drop of Christ's blood being a sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world.' For however pious this

may appear, it is absolutely false and papistical." Sir, this argument is perfectly new, and intirely your own. It were great pity to disturb you in the enjoyment of it.

A seventh argument you ground on those words in the *Plain Account of the People called Methodists*, 'It is a point we chiefly insist upon, that orthodoxy or right opinions, is a very slender part of religion, if any part of it at all.' "The plain consequence whereof is (so you affirm) that teaching and believing the fundamental errors of popery, with the whole train of their abominations and idolatries, are of very little moment, if any." Strain again, Sir: pull hard; or you will never be able to drag this conclusion out of these premises.

I assert, '1. That in a truly religious man, right opinions are a very slender part of religion. 2. That in an irreligious, a profane man, they are not any part of religion at all: such a man not being one jot more religious, because he is orthodox.' Sir, it does not follow from either of these propositions, that wrong opinions are not an hindrance to religion: and much less, that "teaching and believing the fundamental errors of popery, with the whole train of their abominations and idolatries, (practised, I presume you mean, as well as taught and believed,) are of very little moment, if any." I am so far from saying or thinking this, that in my printed Letter to a priest of that communion, (did you never read it, or hear of it before?) are these express words, 'I pity you much, having the same assurance, that Jesus is the Christ, and that no Romanist can expect to be saved, according to the terms of his covenant,' (Third Journal, Vol. I. p. 407.) Do you term this "An extenuation of their abominations? A reducing them to almost a mere nothing."

47. You argue, eighthly, thus: "The Methodist doctrine of impressions and assurances, holds equally for popish enthusiasts." This needs no answer; I have already shewn that the Methodist doctrine in these respects is both scriptural and rational.

Your ninth argument is, "Their sudden conversions

stand upon the same footing with the popish." You should say, "Are a proof that they are promoting popery." I leave you to enjoy this argument also.

But the dreadful one you reserve for the last, namely, our "recommending popish books. One is the life of Mr. de Renty, of which Mr. Wesley has published *an extract*." To prove your inimitable fairness here, you scrape up again all the trash, wherein the weak writer of that life abounds, and which I had pared off and thrown away. Sir, could you find nothing to your purpose in the *Extract* itself? I fancy you might; for I have purposely left in two or three particulars, to shew of what communion he was, which I did not think it right to conceal.

You go on. "Francis of Sales is another papist, much commended by Mr. W.; and who, he doubts not, is in Abraham's bosom. He is the Methodist's bosom friend." I believe he is in Abraham's bosom. But he is no bosom-friend of the Methodists. I question whether one in five hundred of them, have so much as heard his name. And as for me, neither do I "commend him much, nor recommend" him at all. His life I never saw, nor any of his works, but his 'Introduction to a Holy Life.' This the late Dr. Nichols translated into English, published and strongly *recommended*. Therefore, if this be a proof of promoting popery, that censure falls not on me but him.

I have now considered all the arguments you have brought to prove, "That the Methodists are carrying on the work of popery." And I am persuaded, every candid man, who rightly weighs what has been said, with any degree of attention, will clearly see not only, that no one of those arguments is of any real force at all, but that you do not believe yourself; you do not believe the conclusion, which you *make as if* you would prove. Only you keep close to your laudable resolution of throwing as much dirt as possible.

48. It remains only to gather up some of your fragments, as still further proofs of your integrity. You graciously say, "I do not lay much stress upon the charge of some of

the angry Moravians, against Mr. W. and his brother, for preaching popery." Sir, if you had, you would only have hurt yourself. For, 1. The Moravians never, that I know of, brought this charge at all. 2. When Mr. C. and two other predestinarians (these were the persons) affirmed, "they had heard both my brother and me preach *popery*," they meant neither more nor less thereby, than the doctrine of universal redemption. "Some connection between the doctrines of the Methodists and Papists, hath been shewn through this whole comparison." Shewn! But how? By the same art of wiredrawing and decyphering, which would prove an equal connection between the Methodists and Mahometans.

"Jesuits have often mingled, and been the ringleaders among our enthusiastic sectaries." Sir, I am greatly obliged to you for your compliment, as well as for your parallel of Mr. Faithful Commin. And pray, Sir, at what time do you think it was, that I first "mingled with those enthusiastic sectaries?" When I came back from Germany? Or when I returned from Georgia? Or while I was at Lincoln-College?—Although the plot itself might be laid before, when I was at Christ-Church, or at the Charter-house school.

But "a Jesuit's or enthusiast's declaring against popery, is no test of their sincerity." Most sure; nor is a nameless person's declaring against Methodism, any proof that he is not a Jesuit. I remember well, when a well-dressed man, taking his stand not far from Moorfields, had gathered a large company, and was vehemently asserting, That "those rogues, the Methodists, were all Papists:" till a gentleman coming by, fixed his eye on him and cried, "Stop that man: I know him personally: he is a Romish priest."

I know not that any thing remains on this head, which bears so much as the face of an argument. So that of all the charges you have brought (and truly you have not been sparing) there is not one wherein your proof falls more miserably short, than in this, That "the Methodists are advancing popery."

49. I have at length gone through your whole performance, weighed whatever you cite from my writings, and shewn at large how far those passages are from proving all, or any part of your charge. So that all you attempt to build on them, "of the pride and vanity of the Methodists, (sect. 3,) of their shuffling and prevaricating, (s. 4,) of their affectation of prophesying, (s. 5,) laying claim to the miraculous favours of heaven, (s. 6,) unsteadiness of temper, (s. 9,) unsteadiness in sentiment and practice, (s. 11,) art and cunning, (s. 12,) giving up inspiration and extraordinary calls, (s. 13,) scepticism, infidelity, atheism, (s. 14,) uncharitableness to their opponents, (s. 15, &c.) contempt of order and authority, (s. 18,) and fierce, rancorous quarrels with each other, (s. 19, &c.) of the tendency of Methodism to undermine morality and good works, (s. 20,) and to carry on the good work of *popery*:" (s. 21,) all this fabric falls to the ground at once, unless you can find some better foundation to support it.

50. These things being so, what must all unprejudiced men think of you and your whole performance? You have advanced a charge, not against one or two persons only, but indiscriminately against a whole *body of people*, of his Majesty's subjects, Englishmen, protestants, members I suppose, of your own church: a charge containing abundance of articles, and most of them of the highest and blackest nature. You have prosecuted this with unparalleled bitterness of spirit and acrimony of language; using sometimes the most coarse, rude, scurrilous terms, sometimes the keenest sarcasms you could devise. The point you have steadily pursued in *thus* prosecuting *this* charge, is, first, To expose the whole people to the hatred and scorn of all mankind; and next to stir up the *civil powers* against them. And when this charge comes to be fairly weighed, there is not a single article of it true! The passages you cite to make it good, are one and all, such as prove nothing less than the points in question: most of them such as you have palpably maimed, corrupted, and strained to a sense never thought of by the writer; many

of them such as are flat against you, and overthrow the very point they are brought to support. What can they think, but that this is the most shocking violation of the Christian rule, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:' the most open affront to all justice, and even common humanity, the most glaring insult upon the common sense and reason of mankind, which has lately appeared in the world.

If you say, "But I have proved the charge upon Mr. Whitefield:" admit you have, (which I do not allow,) Mr. Whitefield is not *the Methodists;* no, nor the societies under his care; they are not a third, perhaps not a tenth part of the Methodists. What then can excuse your ascribing *their* faults (were they proved) to the *whole body?* You indict ten men. Suppose you prove the indictment upon one, will you *therefore* condemn the other nine? Nay, let every man bear his own burden, since every man must give an account of himself to God.

I had occasion once before to say to an Opponent, you know not to shew mercy. Yet that gentleman did regard truth and justice. But you regard neither mercy, justice, nor truth. To vilify, to blacken, is your one point. I pray God, it may not be laid to your charge! May he shew you mercy, though you shew none!

I am, Sir, your friend and well-wisher,

JOHN WESLEY.

A

SECOND LETTER

TO THE

LORD BISHOP OF EXETER,

IN ANSWER TO HIS LORDSHIP'S LATE LETTER.

MY LORD,

IN my late Letter to your Lordship, I used no ceremony. I suppose it was not expected from one who was so deeply injured; and, I trust, I used no rudeness; if I did, I am ready to ask your lordship's pardon.

That letter, "related to a matter of fact published on your lordship's authority, which I endeavoured to falsify," (The Bishop of Exeter's letter, page 2, 3.) and your lordship, now again endeavours to support.

The facts alleged are, 1st, That I told Mrs. Morgan, at Mitchel, 'You are in hell; you are damned already.' 2dly, 'That I asked her to live upon free cost.' 3dly, 'That she determined to admit no more Methodists into her house.'

At first I thought so silly and improbable a story neither deserved nor required a confutation; but when my friends thought otherwise, I called on Mrs. Morgan, who denied she ever said any such thing. I wrote down her

words: part of which I transcribed in my letter to your lordship, as follows:

'On Saturday, Aug. 25, 1750, Mr. Trembath, of St. Ginneys, Mr. Haime, of Shaftsbury, and I, called at Mr. Morgan's, at Mitchel. The servant telling me her master was not at home, I desired to speak with her mistress, the "honest, sensible woman." I immediately asked, 'Did I ever tell you or your husband, that you would be damned, if you took any money of me?' (So the story ran in the first part of the Comparison: it has now undergone a very considerable alteration.) 'Or did you or he ever affirm, (another circumstance related at Truro) that I was rude with your maid?' She replied, vehemently, 'Sir, I never said you were, or that you said any such thing. And I do not suppose my husband did. But we have been belied as well as our neighbours.' She added, 'When the bishop came down last, he sent us word he would dine at our house. But he did not, being invited to a neighbouring gentleman's. He sent for me thither and said, "Good woman, do you know these people that go up and down? Do you know Mr. Wesley? Did not he tell you, you would be damned, if you took any money of him? And did not he offer rudeness to your maid?" I told him, 'No, my lord. He never said any such thing to me, nor to my husband that I know of. He never offered any rudeness to any maid of mine. I never saw or knew any harm by him. But a man told me once (who I was told was a Methodist preacher) that I should be damned, if I did not know my sins were forgiven.''

Your lordship replies, "I neither sent word that I would dine at their house, nor did I send for Mrs. Morgan; every word that passed between us, was at her own house at Mitchel," (p. 7.) I believe it; and consequently, that the want of exactness in this point rests on Mrs. Morgan, not on your lordship.

Your lordship adds, "The following attestations will sufficiently clear me from any imputation, or even suspicion, of having published a falsehood:" I apprehend otherwise;

to wave what is past, if the facts now published by your lordship, or any part of them, be not true; then certainly your lordship will lie under more than a "suspicion of having published a falsehood."

The attestations your lordship produces are, 1st, Those of your lordship's chancellor and archdeacon. 2dly, Those of Mr. Bennet.

The former attests, that in June, or July, 1748, Mrs. Morgan did say those things to your lordship. (p. 8.) I believe she did, and therefore acquit your lordship of being the inventor of those falsehoods.

Mr. Bennet avers, that in January last, Mrs. Morgan repeated to him what she had before said to your lordship. (p. 11.) Probably she might; having said those things once, I do not wonder if she said them again.

Nevertheless, before Mr. Trembath and Mr. Haime she denied every word of it.

To get over this difficulty, your lordship publishes a second letter from Mr. Bennet, wherein he says, 'On March 4th last, Mrs. Morgan said, I was told by my servant that I was wanted above stairs; here, when I came, the chamber door being open, I found them (Mr. Wesley and others) round the table on their knees.' He adds, 'That Mrs. Morgan owned one circumstance in it was true, but as to the other parts of Mr. Wesley's letter to the bishop, she declares it is all false.'

I believe Mrs. Morgan did say this to Mr. Bennet, and that therefore neither is he *the maker of a lie*. But he is the relater of a whole train of falsehoods, and those told merely for telling's sake. I was never yet in any *chamber* at Mrs. Morgan's. I was never *above stairs* there in my life. On August 25, 1750, I was *below stairs* all the time I was in the house. When Mrs. Morgan came in, I was *standing* in the large parlour; nor did any of us *kneel* while we were under the roof. This both Mr. Trembath and Mr. Haime can attest upon oath, whatsoever Mrs. Morgan may *declare* to the contrary.

But she declared farther, (so Mr. Bennet writes,) 'That Mr. John Wesley, some time ago, said to a maid of her's, such things as were not fit to be spoken,' (p. 11.) and Mr. Morgan declared, that he 'did or said such indecent things to the above-named maid (the same fact, I presume, only a little embellished) in his chamber, in the night, that she immediately ran down stairs, and protested she would not go near him or any of the Methodists more,' p. 12.

To save trouble to your lordship, as well as to myself, I will put this cause upon a very short issue. If your lordship will only prove, that ever I lay one night in Mrs. Morgan's house, nay, that ever I was in the town of Mitchel after sun-set, I will confess the whole charge.

What your lordship mentions by "the way" I will now consider. "Some of your western correspondents imposed upon the *leaders of Methodism*, by transmitting to London a notoriously false account of my charge to the clergy. Afterwards the Methodists confessed themselves to have been deceived; yet some time after, the Methodists at Cork, in Ireland, your own brother at the head of them, reprinted the same lying pamphlet, as my performance," p. 4, 5.

My lord, I know not who are your lordship's *Irish correspondents*: but here are almost as many mistakes as lines. For, 1. They were none of *my* correspondents who sent that account to London. 2. It was sent not to the leaders of Methodism, but to one who was no Methodist at all. 3. That it was a *false* account I do not know. But your lordship may easily put it out of dispute. And many have wondered that your lordship did not do so long ago, by printing the charge in question. 4. I did never confess, it was a *false* account; nor any person by my consent, or with my knowledge. 5. That account was never reprinted at Cork at all. 6. When it was reprinted at Dublin, your lordship had not disowned it. 7. My brother was not in Dublin when it was done; nor did either he or I know of it till long after.

Therefore, when my brother was asked, 'How he could reprint such an account, after your lordship had publickly disowned it,' I do not at all wonder, that 'he did not offer a single word in answer.'

Whether this, as well as my former letter, be "mere rant and declamation," or plain and sober reason, I must refer to the world and your lordship's own conscience.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
May 8, 1752.

A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. MR. POTTER.

NORWICH, NOV. 4, 1758.

REV. SIR,

1. TILL to-day I had not a sight of your Sermon, *On the pretended inspiration of the Methodists.* Otherwise I should have taken the liberty, some days sooner, of sending you a few lines. That sermon, indeed, only repeats what has been often said before, and as often answered. But as it is said *again*, I believe it is my duty to answer it *again.* Not that I have any acquaintance with Mr. Caley or Osborn: I never exchanged a word with either. However, as you lump me and them together, I am constrained to speak for myself, and once more, 'to give a reason of my hope,' that I am clear from the charge you bring against me.

2. There are several assertions in your sermon which need not be allowed: but they are not worth disputing. At present, therefore, I shall only speak of two things. 1. Your account of the *new birth*; and, 2. *The pretended inspiration* (as you are pleased to term it) *of the Methodists.*

N. B. Mr. Potter's words are inserted between inverted commas.

3. Of the new birth, you say, "The terms of being regenerated, of being born again, of being born of God, are often used to express the works of gospel righteousness," (page 10, 11.) I cannot allow this. I know not that they are ever used in Scripture, to express any *outward work* at all. They always express an *inward work* of the Spirit, whereof baptism is the outward sign. You add, "Their primary, peculiar, and precise meaning signifies," (a little impropriety of expression,) "our redemption from death and restoration to eternal life, through the grace of God," (p. 13) It does not, unless by death you mean *sin;* and by eternal life, *holiness*. The precise meaning of the term is, 'A new birth unto righteousness,' an inward change from unholy to holy tempers. You go on: "this grace our Lord here calls, entering into the kingdom of God." If so, his assertion is, 'Except a man be born again—he cannot be born again. Not so. What he says is, except a man experience *this change*, he cannot enter into my kingdom.

4. You proceed: "Our holy church doth teach us, that, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, we are received into the number of the children of God—this is the first part of the new birth," (p. 13.) What is the *first part* of the new birth? *Baptism?* It is the *outward sign* of that inward and spiritual grace; but no *part* of it at all. It is impossible it should be. The outward sign is no more a part of the inward grace than the body is a part of the soul. Or do you mean, that *regeneration* is a *part* of the new birth? Nay, this is the *whole* of it. Or is it the *laver of regeneration* which is the first *part* of it? That cannot be: for you suppose this to be the same with baptism.

5. "The second part, the inward and spiritual grace, is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." What! Is the new birth the *second part* of the new birth? I apprehend it is the first and second part too. And surely nothing could have prevented your seeing this, but the ardour of your spirit, and the impetuosity with which you rush along and trample down all before you. Your manner

of writing reminds me of an honest Quaker in Cornwall, whose words I would recommend to your consideration. Being consulted by one of the friends, whether he should publish a tract which he had read to many in private; he replied, 'What, art thou not content with laying John Wesley on his back, but thou must tread his guts out too?'

6. So much for your account of the *new birth*. I am, in the second place, to consider the account you give of "the pretended inspiration" (so you are pleased to term it) "of the Methodists." "The Holy Ghost sat on the apostles with cloven tongues as of fire—and signs and wonders were done by their hands." (Wonders indeed! For they healed the sick by a word, a touch, a shadow!

'They spake the dead alive, and living dead.')

"But though these extraordinary operations of the Spirit have been long since withdrawn, yet the pretension to them still subsists in the confident claim of the Methodists," (pages 16, 17, 18.) This you boldly affirm, and I flatly deny. I deny, that either I, or any in connection with me, (for others, whether called Methodists, or any thing else, I am no more concerned to answer than you are,) do now, or ever did lay any claim to "these extraordinary operations of the Spirit."

7. But you will prove it. They "confidently and presumptuously claim a particular and immediate inspiration," (Ibid.) I answer, first, so do *you*, and in this very sermon, though you call it by another name. By *inspiration*, we mean, that inward assistance of the Holy Ghost, which "helps our infirmities, enlightens our understanding, rectifies our will, comforts, purifies, and sanctifies us." (p. 14.) Now all this you claim as well as I; for these are your own words, "Nay, but you claim a *particular* inspiration." So do you: do not *you* expect him to sanctify *you* in *particular?* "Yes, but I look for no *immediate* inspiration." You do: you expect he will *immediately* and *directly* help your infirmities. Sometimes, it is true, he does this, by the *mediation* or intervention of other men: but at other

times, particularly in private prayer, he gives that help *directly* from himself. "But is this all you mean by *particular, immediate* inspiration?" It is, and so I have declared a thousand times in private, in public, by every method I could devise. It is pity, therefore, that any should still undertake to give an account of my sentiments, without either hearing or reading what I say. Is this doing as we would be done to?

8. I answer, secondly, There is no analogy between claiming "this inspiration of the Spirit," who you allow, "assists and will assist all true believers to the end of the world:" (p. 18,) and claiming those *extraordinary* operations of the Spirit, which were vouchsafed to the apostles. The former, both you and I pretend to: yea, and enjoy; or we are no believers. The latter *you* do not pretend to: nor do I; nor any that are in connection with me.

9. "But you *do* pretend to them. For you pray that signs and wonders may still be wrought in the name of Jesus." True: but what signs and wonders? The conversion of sinners; the 'healing the broken in heart: the turning men from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.' These and these only are the signs and wonders which were mentioned in that prayer. And did I not see these signs and wonders still wrought, I would sooner hew wood, or draw water, than preach the gospel. For those are to me very awful words, which our Lord speaks of *prophets* or teachers; 'Ye shall know them,' (whether they are true or *false prophets*) 'by their fruits: Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit—Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.' What *fruit* you have *brought forth* at Reymerston, I know not; God knoweth.

10. "Your followers, however, do pretend to the grace of a miraculous conversion." Is there any conversion that is not *miraculous?* Is conversion a natural or *supernatural* work: I suppose all who allow there is any such thing, believe it to be supernatural. And what is the difference

between a *supernatural* and a *miraculous* work, I am yet to learn.

"But they say, 'that at such a time, and in such a manner, the divine illumination shone upon them; Jesus knocked at the door of their hearts, and the Holy Ghost descended upon their souls." That is, in plain terms, raillery apart, at a particular *time*, which they cannot easily forget, God did, in so eminent a manner as they never experienced before, "enlighten their understanding," (they are your own words,) "comfort and purify their hearts, and give his heavenly Spirit to dwell in them." But what has all this to do with "those extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit?"

11. "Under these pretended impressions, their next advance is, to a call to preach the word themselves; and forth they issue, as under the immediate inspiration of God's Spirit, with the language of apostles, and zeal of martyrs, to publish the gospel, as if they were among our remotest ancestors, strangers to the name of Christ," (p. 20, 21.)

The plain truth is this. One in five hundred of those whom God so "enlightens and comforts," sooner or later, believes it to be his duty to call other sinners to repentance. Such an one commonly stifles this conviction, till he is so uneasy he can stifle it no longer. He then consults one or more of those whom he believes to be competent judges: and under the direction of these, goes on, step by step, from a narrower to a larger sphere of action. Mean time he endeavours to use only the "language of the apostles," to speak the things of the Spirit, in the words of the Spirit. And he longs and prays for "the zeal of martyrs," continually finding the need thereof; seeing our present countrymen are as great strangers to *the mind* that was in Christ, as our ancestors were to his name.

12. "But the Holy Spirit no longer comes from heaven like a rushing mighty wind. It no longer appears in cloven tongues, as of fire." I wonder who imagines it does? "We now discern not between his suggestions and the

motions of our rational nature." Many times we do not: but at other times, God may give such peace or joy, and such love to himself and all mankind, as we are sure are not "the motions of our own nature. To say, then, that the Holy Spirit began his work at such a time, and continued it so long in such a manner, is as vain as to account for the blowing of the wind." Hold! "Accounting for," is not the thing. To make a parallel, it must be, is as vain as to say, that the "wind began to blow at such a time," and "continued so long in such a manner." And where is the vanity of this? Why may I not say, either that the "wind began to blow at such a time," and "blew so long in such a manner:" or that God "began at such a time" to comfort my soul? That he "continued" that consolation "so long?" And in "such a manner," by giving me either peace and joy in believing, or a lively hope of the glory of God?

13. "Not that we are without a memorable instance of this instantaneous impulse, in the sudden conversion of St. Paul," (page 23.) A poor instance this; for it does not appear, that his was a *sudden* conversion. It is true, 'A great light suddenly shone round about him;' but this light did not convert him. After he had seen this, 'he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.' And probably during the whole time, God was "gradually working" in his heart, till he 'arose, and being baptized, washed away his sins, and was filled with the Holy Ghost.'

14. But to return. "Their teachers claim a particular and immediate inspiration in their nauseous effusions," (page 22.) Certainly they *claim* either a particular and immediate inspiration (as above explained) or none at all. But this is no other *inspiration* (call it *influence*, if you please, though it is a far stronger term) than every one must have, before he can either understand, or preach, or live the gospel. "But there is not in Scripture the least promise or encouragement to expect any particular inspiration." Yes, surely, such an inspiration as this; you have allowed it over and over. And what *external evi-*

dence of this, would you have? I will believe, *you* are *thus inspired*, if you convert sinners to God, and if you yourself are 'holy in all manner of conversation.'

15. Is there "no need of this inspiration now, because the prejudices of mankind are in favour of the gospel, and the profession of it is under the protection and encouragement of the civil power?" "The prejudices of mankind are in favour of the gospel!" What, the prejudices of the bulk of mankind? To go no farther than England. Are the bulk of our nation prejudiced in favour of the genuine gospel? Of the holiness which it enjoins; of chastity and temperance; of denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; of dying to the world, and devoting all our heart, and all our life to God? Are they prejudiced in favour of presenting our souls and bodies a constant, holy sacrifice to God? What less than this is gospel holiness? And are the prejudices of mankind in favour of this?

16. Likewise how far this real Christianity is "under the protection and encouragement of the civil power," I know not. But I know, 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution,' domestic persecution, if no other; for 'the foes of' such 'a man shall be they of his own household. There shall be,' and there are now, 'five in one house, three against two, and two against three:' and that not for being Methodists, for having a nick-name (although that may be the *pretence*, for want of a better: for who scruples to throw a man into the ditch, and then beat him, because his clothes are dirty?) but for *living godly*; for loving and serving God, according to the best light they have? And certainly these need the assistance of God's Spirit, to strengthen and comfort them, that they may suffer all things, rather than turn aside, in any point from the gospel-way.

17. "But the Scriptures are a complete and a sufficient rule. Therefore to what purpose could any further inspiration serve? All farther inspiration is unnecessary: the supposed need of it is highly injurious to the written word. And the pretension thereto, (which must be either to

explain, or to supply it) is a wicked presumption, with which Satan hath filled their hearts, to lie of the Holy Ghost," (p. 27, 28.)

High sounding words! But, blessed be God, they are only *brutum fulmen*; they make much noise, but do not wound. "To what purpose could any further inspiration serve?" Answer yourself: "To enlighten the understanding, and to rectify the will." Else, be "the Scriptures" ever so "complete," they will not save your soul. How then can you imagine it is "unnecessary?" And that "the supposed need of it is injurious to the written word?" And when you say yourself, "the Spirit is to teach us all things, and to guide us into all truth:" judge you, whether this is to "explain," or to "supply the written word." "O he does this by the written word." True; but also 'by his holy inspiration.' So the compilers of our liturgy speak: who, therefore, according to you, are guilty of "wicked presumption, with which Satan filled their hearts, to lie of the Holy Ghost."

18. These also are the men upon whom you fall in the following warm words. "The power of enthusiasm over an heated imagination, may be very great. But it must be under the ferment of that old, sour leaven, hypocrisy, to rise to that daring height." I think not: I think they were neither hypocrites nor enthusiasts, though they teach me to pray for, consequently to expect, (unless I am an hypocrite indeed,) 'God's holy inspiration,' both in order to 'think the things that be good,' and also, 'perfectly to love him, and worthily to magnify his holy name.'

19. You go on, "They boast that their heart is clean, and their spirit right within them." Sir, did you ever read morning prayer on the tenth day of the month? You then said, 'Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' Did you *mean* what you said? If you did not, you were guilty of the grossest hypocrisy. If you did, *when* did you expect God would answer that prayer? When your body was in the grave! Too late!

Unless we have clean hearts before we die, it had been good we had never been born!

20. "But they boast they are pure from sin, harmless, and undefiled." So, in a sound sense, is every true believer. "Nay, they boast, that their bodies are a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." Sir, is not your's? Are not your soul and body such a sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God? As the Lord God liveth, before whom we stand, if they are not, you are not a Christian. If you are not an holy, living sacrifice, you are still 'dead in trespasses and sins.' You are an 'alien from the commonwealth of Israel, without *Christian* hope, without God in the world!'

21. You add, "Thus have I exposed their boasted claim to a particular and immediate inspiration," (p. 30.) No, Sir, you have only exposed yourself. For all that we claim *you* allow. "I have shewn what a miserable farce is carrying on, beneath the mask of a more refined holiness." No tittle of this have you shewn yet. And before you attempt again to shew any thing concerning us, let me entreat you, Sir, to acquaint yourself better with our real sentiments. Perhaps you may then find, that there is not so wide a difference as you imagined, between you, and,

Rev. Sir, your servant for Christ's sake,

JOHN WESLEY.

Laken-heath, Nov. 17, 1758.

A LETTER TO THE REVEREND DR. FREE.

Tullamore, May 2, 1758.

Rev. Sir,

1. A LITTLE tract, appearing under your name, was yesterday put into my hands. You therein call upon me, to speak, "if I have any exceptions to make to what is advanced," and promise to "reply as fairly and candidly as I can expect, provided those exceptions be drawn up, as you have set the example, in a short compass, and in the manner wherein all wise and good people would choose to manage a religious dispute," p. 22.

2. "In a short compass," Sir, they will certainly be drawn up, for my own sake, as well as yours. For I know the value of time, and would gladly employ it all in what more immediately relates to eternity. But I do not promise to draw them up in that manner, whereof you have *set the example.* I cannot; I dare not: for I fear God, and do really believe there is a judgment to come. Therefore I dare not 'return evil for evil;' neither 'railing for railing.' Nor can I allow, that your manner of treating this subject, is that "wherein all *wise* and *good* people would choose to manage a religious dispute." Far, very far from it. I shall

rejoice, if a little more fairness and candor should appear in your future writings. But I cannot expect it; for the *nigrae succus loliginis*, wormwood and gall, seem to have infected your very vitals.

3. The quotation from Bishop Gibson, which takes up five out of nineteen pages, I have particularly answered already, in "A Letter to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London:" and in a manner wherewith I have good reason to believe his lordship was entirely satisfied. With his lordship, therefore, I have no present concern: my business is now with you only. And seeing you are "now ready (as you express it) to *run a tilt*," I must make what defence I can. Only you must excuse me from meeting you on the same ground, or fighting you with the same weapons. My weapons are only truth and love. May the God of truth and love strengthen my weakness!

4. I wave what relates to Mr. V—'s personal character, which is too well known to need my defence of it: as likewise the concurrence (real or imaginary I cannot tell) which gave birth to your performance. All that I concern myself with is your five vehement assertions, with regard to the people called Methodists. These I shall consider in their order, and prove to be totally false and groundless.

5. The first is this, "Their whole ministry is an open and avowed opposition to one of the fundamental articles of our religion," (p. 4.) How so? Why "The 20th article declares, We may not so expound one scripture, that it be repugnant to another. And yet it is notorious, that the Methodists do ever explain the word Faith as it stands in some of St. Paul's writings, so as to make his doctrine a direct and flat contradiction to that of St. James," p. 5.

This stale objection has been answered a hundred times, so that I really thought we should have heard no more of it. But since it is required, I repeat the answer once more. By faith we mean, *the evidence of things not seen*: by justifying faith, a divine evidence or conviction, that Christ *loved me and gave himself for me*. St. Paul affirms, that a man is justified by *this faith*; which James never denies;

but only asserts, that a man cannot be justified by a *dead faith*. And this St. Paul never affirms.

"But St. James declares, 'faith without works is dead.' Therefore it is clearly St. James's meaning, that a faith which is without virtue and morality, cannot produce salvation. Yet the Methodists so explain St. Paul, as to affirm that faith without virtue or morality will produce salvation." Where? In which of their writings? This needs some proof: I absolutely deny the fact. So that all which follows is mere flourish, and falls to the ground at once: and all that you aver of their "open and scandalous opposition to the 20th article," (p. 6,) is no better than open and scandalous slander.

6. Your second assertion is this, "The Methodist, for the perdition of the souls of his followers, openly gives our Saviour the lie, leads the Scripture with falsehood and contradiction: (and pray what could a Mahometan, or infidel, or the devil himself, do more,) yea, openly blasphemes the name of Christ, by saying, that the works of men are of no consideration at all: that God makes no distinction between virtue and vice, that he does not hate vice or love virtue. What blasphemy then and impiety are those wretches guilty of, who in their diabolical frenzy, dare to contradict our Saviour's authority, and that in such an essential article of religion!" (p. 7, 8, 9.) Here also the Methodists plead not guilty, and require you to produce your evidence; to shew in which of their writings they affirm, that God "will not reward every man according to his works; that he makes no distinction between virtue and vice; that he does not hate vice or love virtue." These are positions which they never remember to have advanced. If you can, refresh their memory.

7. You assert, thirdly, The Methodists, by these positions, "destroy the essential attributes of God, and ruin his character as Judge of the world." Very true—if they held these positions. But here lies the mistake. They hold no such positions. They never did. They detest and

[illegible] In arguing therefore on this supposition, you [illegible] beating the air.

8. You assert, fourthly, The Methodists "teach and propagate downright atheism, (a capital crime; and atheists in some countries have been put to death,) hereby they make room for all manner of vice and villany, by which means the bands of society are dissolved. And therefore this attempt must be considered as a sort of treason by magistrates," p. 10, 11.

Again we deny the whole charge, and call for proof: and, blessed be God, so do the magistrates in Great Britain. Behold, vehement asseverations will not pass upon them for legal evidence. Nor indeed on any reasonable men. They can distinguish between *arguing* and *calling names*. The former becomes a gentleman and a Christian: but what is he, who can be guilty of the latter?

9. You assert, lastly, That any who choose a Methodist clergyman for their lecturer, "put into that office, which should be held by a minister of the Church of England, an enemy, who undermines not only the legal establishment of that church, but also the foundation of all religion," p. 13.

Once more we must call upon you for the proof: the proof of these two particulars, first, That I, John Wesley, am "an enemy to the Church, and that I undermine not only the legal establishment of the Church of England, but also the very foundation of all religion." Secondly, That "Mr. V. is an enemy to the church, and is undermining all religion, as well as the establishment," p. 13.

10. Another word and I am done. Are there "certain qualifications required of all lecturers, before they are by law permitted to speak to the people?" And is a *subscription* to the Thirty-nine Articles of religion one of these qualifications? And is a person who does not "conform to such subscription" disqualified to be a *lecturer*? Or, who 'has ever *held* or *published* any thing contrary to what the Church of England maintains?" (p. 14.) Then certainly you, Dr. John Free, are not "permitted by law to speak to the

people:" neither are you "qualified to be a *lecturer*" in any church in London or England, as by law *established*. For you flatly deny and openly oppose more than one or two of those Articles. You do not in any wise conform to the subscription you made, before you were ordained either priest or deacon. You both *hold* and *publish* (if you are the author and publisher of the tract before me) what is grossly, palpably "contrary to what the Church of England maintains," in her Homilies as well as Articles: those Homilies to which you have also subscribed, in subscribing the 36th Article. You have subscribed them, Sir: but did you ever read them? Did you ever read so much as the three first Homilies? I beg of you, Sir, to read these at least, before you write again about the doctrine of the Church of England. And would it not be prudent to read a few of the writings of the Methodists, before you undertake a farther confutation of them? At present you know not the men or their communication. You are as wholly unacquainted both with them and their doctrines, as if you had lived all your days in the islands of Japan, or the desarts of Arabia. You have given a furious assault to you know not whom: and you have done it, you know not why. You have not hurt *me* thereby; but you have hurt yourself: perhaps in your character; certainly in your conscience. For this is not doing to others as you would they should do unto you. When you grow cool, I trust you will see this clearly: and will no more accuse, in a manner so remote from fairness and candor

Rev. Sir,

Your servant for Christ's sake,

JOHN WESLEY.

A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. MR. DOWNES,

RECTOR OF ST. MICHAEL, WOOD-STREET:

Occasioned by his late Tract, entitled,

METHODISM EXAMINED AND EXPOSED.

REV. SIR,

1. IN the tract which you have just published concerning the people called Methodists, you very properly say, "Our first care should be, candidly and fairly to examine their doctrines. For, as to censure them unexamined would be unjust, so to do the same without a fair and impartial examination would be ungenerous." And again, "We should, in the first place, carefully and candidly examine their doctrines," (page 68.) This is undoubtedly true. But have you done it? Have you ever examined their doctrines yet? Have you examined them *fairly?* Fairly and *candidly?* Candidly and *carefully?* Have you read over so much as the *Sermons* they have published? Or the *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion?* I hope you have not: for I would fain make some little excuse for your uttering so many senseless, shameless falsehoods. I hope you know nothing about the Methodists, no more than I do about the Cham of Tartary: that you are ignorant of the whole

affair, and are so *bold*, only because you are *blind*. Bold enough! Throughout your whole tract, you speak *satis pro imperio*: as authoritatively as if you were not an archbishop only, but apostolic vicar also: as if you had the full papal power in your hands, and fire and faggot at your beck! And blind enough: so that you blunder on, through thick and thin, bespattering all that come in your way: according to the old, laudable maxim, 'Throw dirt enough, and some will stick.'

2. I hope, I say, that this is the case, and that you do not knowingly assert so many palpable falsehoods. You say, "If I am mistaken, I shall always be ready and desirous to retract my error," (p. 56.) A little candour and care might have prevented those mistakes: this is the first thing one would have desired. The next is, that they may be removed; that you may see wherein you have been mistaken, and be more wary for the time to come.

3. You undertake to give an account, first, Of the rise and principles, then of the practices of the Methodists.

On the former head you say, "Our church has long been infested with these grievous wolves, who though no more than two when they entered in, and they so young, they might rather be called wolflings," (that is lively and pretty!) "have yet spread their ravenous kind through every part of this kingdom. Where what havock they have made, how many of the sheep they have torn—I need not say. About twenty-five years ago, these two bold, though beardless divines," (pity, Sir, that you had not taught me twenty-five years ago *sapientem pascere barbam*, and thereby to avoid some part of your displeasure) "being lifted with spiritual pride, were presumptuous enough to become founders of the sect called Methodists," (p. 4, 5, 6.) "A couple of young, raw, aspiring twigs of the ministry, dreamed of a special and supernatural call to this," (p. 25.) No, Sir, it was *you* dreamed of this, not *we*. We dreamed of nothing twenty-five years ago, but instructing our pupils in religion and learning, and a few prisoners, in the common principles of Christianity. You go on. "They were

ambitious of being accounted missionaries, immediately delegated by heaven to correct the errors of bishops and archbishops, and reform their abuses, to instruct the clergy in the true nature of Christianity, and to caution the laity, not to venture their souls in any such unhallowed hands, as refused to be initiated in all the mysteries of Methodism," (p. 20, 21.) Well *asserted* indeed! But where is the *proof* of any one of these propositions? I must insist upon this; clear, cogent proof. Else they must be set down for so many glaring falsehoods.

4. "The church of Rome (to which on so many accounts they were much obliged, and as gratefully returned the obligation) taught them to set up for *infallible* interpreters of Scripture," (p. 54.) Pray on what accounts are we "obliged to the Church of Rome?" And how have we "returned the obligation?" I beg you would please, 1. To explain this: and, 2. To prove, that we ever yet (whoever taught us) "set up for *infallible* interpreters of Scripture." So far from it, that we have over and over declared, in print as well as in public preaching, "We are no more to expect *any living man* to be *infallible* than to be omniscient," (Vol. VIII. p. 217.)

5. "As to other extraordinary gifts, influences, and operations of the Holy Ghost, no man who has but once dipped into their Journals and other ostentatious trash of the same kind, can doubt their looking upon themselves, as not coming one whit behind the greatest of the apostles," (page 21.)

I acquit you, Sir, of ever having "once dipped into that ostentatious trash." I do not accuse you of having read so much as the titles of my Journals. I say *my* journals; for (as little as you seem to know it) my brother has published none. I therefore look upon this as simple ignorance. You talk thus, because you know no better. You do not know, that in these very journals I utterly disclaim "the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit," and all other "influences and operations of the Holy Ghost," than those that are common to all real Christians.

And yet I will not say, this ignorance is blameless. For ought you not to have known better? Ought you not to have taken the pains of procuring better information, when it might so easily have been had? Ought you to have publickly advanced such heavy charges as these, without knowing whether they were true or not?

6. You proceed to give as punctual an account of us, *tanquam intus et in cute nosses.* "They outstripped, if possible, even Montanus for external sanctity and severity of discipline. They condemned all regard for temporal concerns. They encouraged their devotees to take no thought for any one thing upon earth: the consequence of which was, a total neglect of their affairs, and impoverishment of their families," (p. 22, 23.) Blunder all over! We had no room for any discipline, severe or not, five and twenty years ago: unless college discipline, my brother then residing at Christ-Church, and I at Lincoln-College. And as to our *sanctity* (were it more or less) how do you know it was only *external?* Were you intimately acquainted with us? I do not remember where I had the honour of conversing with you. Or could you (as the legend says of St. Pachomius) 'smell an heretic ten miles' off? And how came you to dream again, that we "condemned all regard for temporal concerns, and encouraged men to take no thought for any one thing upon earth?" Vain dream! We, on the contrary, severely condemn all who neglect their *temporal* concerns, and who do not take care of every thing on earth wherewith God hath intrusted them. The consequence of this is, that the Methodists, so called, do not "neglect their affairs and impoverish their families;" but by diligence in business 'provide things honest in the sight of all men.' Insomuch that multitudes of them, who in time past, had scarce food to eat, or raiment to put on, have now 'all things needful for life and godliness,' and that for their families as well as themselves.

7. Hitherto you have been giving an account of two *wolflings* only: but now they are grown into perfect *wolves.* Let us see what a picture you draw of them in this state, both as to their principles and practice.

You begin with a home stroke. "In the Montanist you may behold the bold lineaments and bloated countenance of the Methodist," (p. 17.) I wish you do not squint at the *honest countenance* of Mr. Venn, who is, indeed, as far from fear, as he is from guile. But if it is somewhat *bloated*, that is not his fault: sickness may have the same effect on yours or mine.

But to come closer to the point. "They have darkened religion with many ridiculous fancies, tending to confound the head, and to corrupt the heart," (p. 13.) "A thorough knowledge of them would work in every rightly-disposed mind an abhorrence of those doctrines, which directly tend to distract the head, and to debauch the heart, by turning faith into frenzy, and the grace of God into wantonness," (page 101, 102.) "These doctrines are unreasonable and ridiculous, clashing with our natural ideas of the divine perfections, with the end of religion, with the honour of God, and man's both present and future happiness. Therefore we pronounce them filthy dreamers, turning faith into fancy, the gospel into farce, thus adding blasphemy to enthusiasm," (p. 66, 68.)

"Take breath, Sir, there is a long paragraph behind: "The abetters of these wild and whimsical notions, are 1. Close friends to the Church of Rome, agreeing with her in almost every thing, but the doctrine of merit: 2. They are no less kind to infidelity, by making the christian religion a mere creature of the imagination: 3. They cut up Christianity by the roots, frustrating the very end for which Christ died, which was, that by holiness we might be 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints:' 4. They are enemies not only to Christianity, but to every religion whatsoever, by labouring to subvert or overturn the whole system of morality: 5. Consequently they must be enemies of society, dissolving the band by which it is united and knit together," (p. 101, 102.) In a word, "All ancient heresies have, in a manner, concentred in the Methodists: particularly those of the Simonians, Gnostics, Antinomians, (as widely different from each other as Predestinarians from Calvinists!) Valentinians, Donatists, and Montanists."

While your hand was in, you might as well have added, Carpocrations, Eutychians, Nestorians, Sabellians. If you say, "I never heard of them:" no matter for that: you may find them as well as the rest in Bishop Pearson's index.

Well, all this is mere flourish; raising a dust, to blind the eyes of the spectators. Generals, you know, prove nothing. So leaving this as it is, let us come to particulars.

But, first, give me leave to transcribe a few words from a tract published some years ago, 'Your lordship premises, It is not at all needful to charge the particular tenets upon the particular persons among them,' (Letter to the Bishop of London, Vol. XII. p. 409.) Indeed it is needful in the highest degree. Just as needful as it is, not to put a stumbling-block in the way of our brethren: not to lay them under an almost insuperable temptation of condemning the innocent with the guilty.

And it is now far more needful than it was then; as that title of reproach, *Methodist*, is now affixed to many people who are not under my care, nor ever had any connexion with me. And what have I to do with these? If you give me a nick-name, and then give it to others whom I know not, does this make *me* accountable for *them*? Either for their principles or practice? In no wise. I am to answer for myself, and for those that are in connexion with me. This is all that a man of common sense can undertake, or a man of common humanity require. Let us begin then upon even ground: and if you can prove upon *me*, *John Wesley*, any one of the charges which you have advanced, call me not only a *wolf*, but an *otter*, if you please.

8. Your first particular charge (which indeed runs thro' your book, and is repeated in twenty different places) is, that we make the way to heaven *too broad*, teaching, men may be saved by faith, without works. Some of your words are, "They set out with forming a fair and tempting model of religion, so flattering the follies of degenerate man, that it could not fail to gain the hearts of multitudes,

especially of the loose and vicious, the lazy and indolent," (p. 52.) "They want to get to heaven the shortest way, and with the least trouble: now a reliance on Christ and disclaiming of good works, are terms as easy as the merest libertine can ask. They persuade their people that they may be saved by the righteousness of Christ, without any holiness of their own: nay, that good works are not only unnecessary, but also dangerous, (p. 31:) that we may be saved by faith without any other requisite," such as "gospel-obedience, and holy life," (p. 38.) Lastly, "The Valentinians pretended, that if good works were necessary to salvation, it was not only to animal men, that is, to all who were not of their clan; and that although sin might damn others, it could not hurt them. In consequence of which they lived in all lust and impurity, and wallowed in the most unheard-of bestialities. The Methodists distinguish much after the same manner," p. 14.

Sir, you are not awake yet. You are dreaming still, and fighting with shadows of your own raising. The "model of religion with which the Methodists *set out*," is perfectly well known, if not to you, yet to many thousands in England who are no Methodists. I laid it before the university of Oxford, at St. Mary's, on January 1, 1733. You may read it when you are at leisure, for it is in print, entitled, *The Circumcision of the Heart*. And whoever reads only that one discourse, with any tolerable share of attention, will easily judge, whether "*that model of religion* flatters the follies of degenerate man," or is likely to "gain the hearts of multitudes, especially of the loose and vicious, the lazy and indolent!" Will a man choose this, as "the *shortest way* to heaven, and with the *least trouble?*" Are these "as *easy terms*, as any libertine or infidel can desire?" The truth is, we have been these thirty years continually reproached for just the contrary to what you dream of: with making the way to heaven *too strait;* with being ourselves *righteous over much*, and teaching others, they could not be saved without *so many works* as it was impossible for them

to perform. And to this day, instead of teaching men, that they may be saved by a faith which is without good works, without "gospel-obedience and holiness of life," we teach exactly the reverse, continually insisting on all *outward* as well as all *inward holiness*. For the notorious truth of this we appeal to the whole tenor of our sermons, printed and unprinted: in particular to those upon our Lord's sermon on the Mount, wherein every branch of gospel-obedience is both asserted and proved to be indispensably necessary to eternal salvation.

Therefore, as to the rest of the "Antinomian trash" which you have so carefully gathered up, as, "That the regenerate are as pure as Christ himself; that it would be criminal for them to pray for pardon; that the greatest crimes are no crimes in the saints," &c. &c. (p. 17,) I have no concern therewith at all, no more than with any that teach it. Indeed I have confuted it over and over, in tracts published many years ago.

9. A second charge which you advance, is, That "we suppose every man's final doom to depend on God's sovereign will and pleasure:" (I presume you mean, on his absolute, unconditional decree:) that we "consider man as a mere machine:" that we suppose believers "cannot fall from grace," (p. 31.) Nay, I suppose none of these things. Let those who do, answer for themselves. I suppose just the contrary, in *Predestination calmly considered*, a tract published ten years ago.

10. A third charge is, "They represent faith as a supernatural principle, altogether precluding the judgment and understanding, and discerned by some internal signs; not as a firm persuasion, founded on the evidence of reason, and discernible only by a conformity of life and manners to such a persuasion," p. 11.

We do not represent faith "as altogether precluding, or at all precluding the judgment and understanding:" rather as enlightening and strengthening the understanding, as clearing and improving the judgment. But we do represent it as the *gift of God*, yea, and a "supernatural gift,"

yet it does not preclude "the evidence of reason;" though neither is this its whole foundation. "A conformity of life and manners" to that persuasion, Christ *loved* me, and *gave himself* for me, is doubtless *one* mark by which it is discerned; but not the *only* one. It is likewise discerned by *internal signs*, both by the witness of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit, namely, 'love, peace, joy, meekness, gentleness:' by all 'the mind which was in Christ Jesus.'

11. You assert, fourthly, "They speak of grace, that it is as perceptible to the heart as sensible objects are to the senses: whereas the Scriptures speak of grace, that it is conveyed imperceptibly; and that the only way to be satisfied whether we have it or not, is to appeal, not to our inward feelings, but our outward actions," p. 32.

We do speak of grace, (meaning thereby, that power of God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure,) that it is "as perceptible to the heart" (while it comforts, refreshes, purifies, and sheds the love of God abroad therein) "as sensible objects are to the senses." And yet we do not doubt, but it may frequently be "conveyed to us imperceptibly." But we know no scripture which speaks of it as *always* conveyed, and *always working* in an imperceptible manner. We likewise allow, that outward actions are *one way* of satisfying us, that we have grace in our hearts. But we cannot possibly allow, that "the only way to be satisfied of this, is to appeal to our *outward actions*, and not to our *inward feelings*." On the contrary, we believe that love, joy, peace, are *inwardly felt*, or they have no being: and that men are satisfied they have grace, first, by feeling these, and afterward by their outward actions.

12. You assert, fifthly, "They talk of regeneration in every Christian, as if it were as sudden and miraculous a conversion, as that of St. Paul and the first converts to Christianity, and as if the signs of it were frightful tremors of body, and convulsive agonies of mind: not as a work graciously begun and gradually carried on by the blessed Spirit, in conjunction with our rational powers and facul-

ties; the signs of which are, sincere and universal obedience," p. 33.

This is partly true, partly false. We do believe regeneration, or in plain English, the new birth, to be as miraculous or supernatural a work now as it was seventeen hundred years ago. We likewise believe, that the spiritual life, which commences when we are born again, must in the nature of the thing, have a *first moment* as well as the natural. But we say again and again, we are concerned for the *substance* of the work, not the *circumstance*. Let it be wrought at all, and we will not contend, whether it be wrought gradually or instantaneously. "But what are the signs that it is wrought?" We never said or thought, that they were either "frightful tremors of body," or "convulsive agonies of mind:" I presume you mean, agonies of mind attended with bodily convulsions. Although we know many persons who *before* this change was wrought, felt much fear and sorrow of mind: which in some of these had such an effect on the body, as to make all their bones to shake. Neither did we ever deny, that it is a "work graciously begun by the Holy Spirit, enlightening our understanding," (which I suppose you call "our rational powers and faculties,") "as well as influencing our affections." And it is certain, he "gradually carries on this work," by continuing to influence all the powers of the soul: and that the *outward sign* of this inward work, is "sincere and universal obedience."

13. A sixth charge is, "They treat Christianity as a wild, enthusiastic scheme, which will bear no examination," (p. 30.) Where or when? In what sermon? In what tract, practical or polemical? I wholly deny the charge. I have myself closely and carefully *examined* every part of it, every verse of the New Testament, in the original, as well as in our own and other translations.

14. Nearly allied to this is the thread-bare charge of *enthusiasm*, with which you frequently and largely compliment us. But as this also is *asserted* only, and not *proved*, it falls to the ground of itself. Mean time your asserting

it, is a plain proof, that you know nothing of the men you talk of. Because you know them not, you so boldly say, "One advantage we have over them, and that is reason." Nay, that is the very question. I appeal to all mankind, whether you have it or not? However, you are sure, we have it not, and are never likely to have. For "reason, you say, cannot do much with an enthusiast, whose first principle is, to have nothing to do with reason, but resolve all his religious opinions and notions into immediate inspiration." Then, by your own account, I am no enthusiast; for I resolve none of my notions into immediate inspiration. I have something to do with reason; perhaps as much as many of those who 'make no account of my labours.' And I am ready to give up every opinion, which I cannot by calm, clear reason, defend. Whenever, therefore, you "will try what you can do by argument," which you have not done yet, I wait your leisure, and will follow you step by step, which way soever you lead.

15. "But is not this plain proof of the enthusiasm of the Methodists, that they despise human learning, and make a loud and terrible out-cry against it?" Pray, Sir, when and where was this done? Be so good as to point out the time and place; for I am quite a stranger to it. I believe indeed, and so do you, that many men make an ill use of their learning. But so they do of their Bibles: therefore, this is no reason for despising or crying out against it. I would use it just as far as it will go; how far I apprehend it may be of use, how far I judge it to be expedient at least, if not necessary for a clergyman, you might have seen, in the *Earnest Address to the Clergy*. But in the mean time I bless God, that there is a more excellent gift than either the knowledge of languages or philosophy. For tongues, and knowledge, and learning, will *vanish away;* but *love never faileth.*

16. I think this is all you have said which is any way material concerning the *doctrines* of the Methodists. The charges you bring concerning their *spirit* or *practice*, may be despatched in fewer words.

And, first, you charge them with pride and uncharitableness. "They talk as proudly as the Donatists, of their being the only true preachers of the gospel, and esteem themselves, in contra-distinction to others, as the regenerate, the children of God, and as having arrived at sinless perfection," p. 15.

All of a piece. We neither talk nor think so. We doubt not but there are many true preachers of the gospel, both in England and elsewhere, who have no connexion with, no knowledge of us. Neither can we doubt, but that there are many thousands of the children of God, who never heard our voices, or saw our faces. And this may suffice for an answer to all the assertions of the same kind, which are scattered up and down your work. Of sinless perfection, here brought in by head and shoulders, I have nothing to say at present.

17. You charge them, secondly, "with boldness and blasphemy, who triumphing in their train of credulous and crazy followers, the *spurious* (should it not be rather *genuine)* offspring of their *insidious craft*, ascribe the glorious event to divine grace, and in almost every page of their paltry harangues, invoke the blessed Spirit to go along with them, in their soul-awakening work, that is, to continue to assist them in seducing the simple and unwary," p. 41.

What we ascribe to divine grace is this, the convincing sinners of the errors of their ways, and the 'turning them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God.' Do not you yourself "ascribe this to grace?" And do not you too "invoke the blessed Spirit, to go along with you in every part of your work?" If you do not, you lose all your labour.—Whether we "seduce men into sin," or by his grace save them from it, is another question.

18. You charge us, thirdly, with "requiring a blind and implicit trust from our disciples," (p. 10,) who accordingly "trust as implicitly in their preachers, as the Papists in their Pope, councils, or church," (p. 51.) Far from it: neither do we require it; nor do they that hear us place any such trust in any creature. They *search the Scriptures*, and

hereby try every doctrine whether it be of God. And what is agreeable to Scripture they embrace; what is contrary to it they reject.

19. You charge us, fourthly, with injuring the clergy in various ways. 1st. "They are very industrious to dissolve or break off that spiritual intercourse, which the relation wherein we stand, requires should be preserved betwixt us and our people." But can that spiritual intercourse be either preserved or broke off, which never existed? What spiritual intercourse exists between *you*, the *rector* of St. Michael, and the people of your parish? I suppose you preach to them once a week, and now and then read prayers. Perhaps you visit one in ten of the sick. And is this all the *spiritual intercourse* which you have with those, 'over whom the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer?' In how poor a sense then do you *watch over the souls*, for whom you are to *give an account* to God! Sir, I wish to God, there were a truly spiritual intercourse between you and all your people! I wish you 'knew all your flock by name, not excepting the men-servants and women-servants!' Then you might 'cherish' each 'as a nurse her own children, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Then might you 'warn every one and exhort every one,' till you should "present every one perfect in Christ Jesus.'

"But they say, our sermons contradict the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of our own Church; yea, that we contradict ourselves, saying one thing in the desk and another in the pulpit." And is there not cause to say so? I myself have heard several sermons preached in churches, which flatly contradicted both the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy, particularly on the head of justification. I have likewise heard more than one or two persons, who "said one thing in the desk, and another in the pulpit." In the desk, they prayed God to 'cleanse the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.' In the pulpit, they said, "There was no such thing as inspiration, since the time of the apostles.'

"But this is not all. You poison the people by the most peevish and spiteful invectives against the clergy, the most rude and rancorous revilings, and the most invidious calumnies,"—(p. 51.) No more than I poison them with *arsenic*. I make no peevish or spiteful invectives against any man. Rude and rancorous revilings, (such as your present tract abounds with,) are also far from me. I dare not 'return railing for railing,' because (whether you know it, or not) I fear God. Invidious calumnies likewise I never dealt in: all such weapons I leave to *you*.

20. One charge remains, which you repeat over and over, and lay a peculiar stress upon: (as to what you talk about *perverting Scripture*, I pass it by, as mere, unmeaning, common-place declamation.) It is the poor old, worn-out tale of "Getting money by preaching." This you only intimate at first. "Some of their followers had an *inward call*, to sell all that they had, and lay it *at their feet*," (p. 22.) Pray, Sir, favour us with the name of one, and we will excuse you as to all the rest. In the next page you grow bolder, and roundly affirm, "With all their heavenly-mindedness, they could not help casting a sheep's eye at the unrighteous mammon. Nor did they pay their court to it with less cunning and success than Montanus. Under the specious appearance of gifts and offerings, they raised contributions from every quarter. Besides the weekly pensions squeezed out of the poorer and lower part of their community, they were favoured with very large oblations from persons of better figure and fortune: and especially from many *believing* wives, who had learned to practise pious frauds on their *unbelieving* husbands."

I am almost ashamed, (having done it twenty times before,) to answer this stale calumny again. But the bold, frontless manner wherein you advance it, obliges me so to do. Know then, Sir, that you have no authority either from scripture or reason, to judge of other men by *yourself*. If *your own* conscience convicts you of loving money, of "casting a sheep's-eye at the unrighteous mammon," humble yourself before God, if haply the thoughts and

desires of your heart may be forgiven you. But, blessed be God, my conscience is clear. My heart does not condemn me in this matter. I know, and God knoweth, that I have no desire to *load* myself *with thick clay*: that I love money no more than I love the mire in the streets: that I seek it not. And I have it not: any more than suffices for food and raiment, for the plain conveniences of life. I pay no court to it at all, or to those that have it, either with cunning or without. For myself, for my own use, I raise no contributions either great or small. The weekly contributions of our community, (which are freely given, not *squeezed* out of any) as well as the gifts and offerings of the Lord's table, never come into my hands. I have no concern with them, not so much as 'the beholding them with my eyes.' They are received every week by the stewards of the society, men of well known character in the world, and by them constantly distributed within the week, to those whom they know to be in real necessity. As to the "very large oblations wherewith I am favoured by persons of better figure and fortune," I know nothing of them: be so kind as to refresh my memory by mentioning a few of their names. I have the happiness of knowing some of great figure and fortune: some right honourable persons. But if I were to say, that all of them together had given me seven pounds in seven years, I should say more than I could make good. And yet I doubt not, but they would freely give me any thing I wanted; but, by the blessing of God, I want nothing that they can give. I want only more of the Spirit of love and power, and of an healthful mind. As to those "many *believing* wives who practise pious frauds on their *unbelieving* husbands," I know them not, no, not one of that kind: therefore I doubt the fact. If you know any such, be pleased to give us their names and places of abode. Otherwise you must bear the blame of being the *lover*, if not *the maker of a lie*.

Perhaps you will say, "Why, a great man said the same thing but a few years ago." What if he did? Let the frog swell as long as he can, he will not equal the ox. *He*

might say many things, all circumstances considered, which will not come well from *you;* as *you* have neither his wit, nor sense, nor learning, nor age, nor dignity.

Tibi parvula res est:
Metiri se quemq; suo modulo ac pede verum est.

If *you* fall upon people that meddle not with you, without either fear or wit, you may possibly find they have a little more to say for themselves than you were aware of.—'I follow peace with all men:' but if a man set upon me, without either rhyme or reason, I think it my duty to defend myself, so far as truth and justice permit. Yet still I am, (if a poor enthusiast may not be so bold as to style himself your brother,)

Reverend Sir,

Your Servant for Christ's sake,

JOHN WESLEY.

London, Nov. 17, 1759.

A

LETTER

TO THE

REVEREND DR. HORNE,

OCCASIONED BY HIS LATE SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, ABOUT 1762.

Rev. Sir,

When you spoke of "*heresies* making their periodical revolutions," of "*Antinomianism* rampant among us," and immediately after, of "the *new lights* at the *Tabernacle* and *Foundry*," must not your hearers naturally think, that Mr. *Whitefield* and I were reviving those heresies? But do you know the persons of whom you speak? Have you ever conversed with them? Have you read their writings? If not, is it kind, is it just, to pass so severe a censure upon them? Had you only taken the trouble of reading one tract, the *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, you would have seen, that a great part of what you affirm, is what I never denied. To put this beyond dispute, I beg leave to transcribe some passages from that treatise; which will shew not only what I teach now, but what I have taught for many years. I will afterward simply and plainly declare, wherein I as yet differ from you. And the rather, that if I err therein, you may, by God's assistance, convince me of it.

I. 1. 'Justification sometimes means, our acquittal at the last day.* 2. That faith alone is the proximate condition of justification.'

II. 1. 'I have here shewn at large, what is the doctrine I teach with regard to justification, and have taught, ever since I was convinced of it myself, by carefully reading the New Testament and the Homilies. In many points, I apprehend it agrees with yours; in some, it does not: these I come now to consider. May God enable me to do it, in love and meekness of wisdom!'

You say, p. 7, "Happy times, when *faith* and *a good life* were synonymous terms." I conceive they never were. Is not faith the root, a good life the tree springing therefrom?

"That good works are a necessary condition of our justification, may be proved, 1. From express testimonies of Scripture. So Isaiah i. 16, 'Cease from evil, learn to do well.' Then 'your sins that were as scarlet, shall be white as snow.' Here 'ceasing from evil, and learning to do well,' are the conditions of pardon," (p. 9.) I answer, without them there is no pardon; yet the immediate condition of it is faith. He that believeth, and he alone, is justified before God. "So Ezekiel xxxiii. 14. 'If the sinner turn from his evil ways,' and 'walk in the statutes of life,' then 'all his sins shall not be once mentioned to him.'" Most sure; that is, if he believe; else, whatever his outward walking be, he cannot be justified.

The next scripture you cite, Mat. xi. 28, (Sermon, p. 10,) proves no more than this, that none find 'rest to their souls,' unless they first *come* to Christ (namely by faith) and then obey him.

But "he says, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.'" He does so: but how does it appear, that this relates to justification at all?

"St. Peter also declares, 'In every nation he that feareth

* Farther Appeal, Part I. Vol. XII. p. 47, 48.

God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him,' Acts x. 34." He is: but none can either fear God or work righteousnes, till he believes according to the dispensation he is under. "And St. John, 'He that doth righteousness is righteous.'" I do not see, that this proves any thing. "And again, 'If we walk in the light as God is in the light, then have we communion with him, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,' 1 John i. 7." This would prove something, if it could be proved, that 'cleansing us from all sin,' meant only justification.

"The Scriptures insist upon the necessity of repentance in particular for that purpose. But repentance comprehends compunction, humiliation, hatred of sin, confession of it, prayer for mercy, ceasing from evil, a firm purpose to do well, restitution of ill-got goods, forgiveness of all who have done us wrong, and works of beneficence," (p. 11, 12.) I believe it does comprehend all these, either as parts or as fruits of it: and it comprehends "the fear," but not "the love of God:" that flows from a higher principle. And he who loves God is not barely in the right way to justification: he is actually justified. The rest of the paragraph asserts just the same thing which was asserted in those words, 'previous to justifying faith must be repentance, and, if opportunity permit, 'fruits meet for repentance.'' But still I must observe, that 'neither the one nor the other is necessary, either in the *same sense*, or in the *same degree* with faith.' No Scripture testimony can be produced, which any way contradicts this.

2. "That works are a necessary condition of our justification, may be proved, secondly, from Scripture examples: particularly those recited in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. These all, 'through faith, wrought righteousness;' without 'working righteousness,' they had never 'obtained the promises,'" (p. 13.) I say the same thing: none are finally saved, but those whose faith 'worketh by love.'

"Even in the thief upon the cross, faith was attended by repentance, piety, and charity." It was; repentance went

before his faith; piety and charity accompanied it. 'Therefore he was not justified by faith alone.' Our church, adopting the words of St. Chrysostom, expressly affirms, in the passage above cited, he was justified by faith alone. And her authority ought to weigh more than even that of Bishop Bull, or of any single man whatever. Authority, be pleased to observe, I plead against authority; reason against reason. It is no objection, that the faith whereby he was justified, *immediately produced* good works. 3. How we are justified by *faith alone*, and yet by such a *faith* as is *not alone:* it may be proper to explain. And this also I choose to do, not in my own words, but in those of our church.

'Faith does not shut out repentance, hope, love, and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified; but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying. So that although they be all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not altogether.' * Neither doth faith shut out good works, necessarily to be done *afterwards*, of duty towards God. That we are justified only by this faith in Christ, speak all the ancient authors: especially Origen, St. Cyprian, St. Chrysostom, Hilary, Basil, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine.'

4. You go on. "Thirdly, if we consider the nature of faith, it will appear impossible that a man should be justified by that alone. Faith is either an *assent* to the gospel truths, or a reliance on the gospel promises. I know of no other notion of faith," (p. 15.) I do: an ελεγχος *of things not seen:* which is far more than a bare *assent*, and yet *toto genere* different from a *reliance*. Therefore, if you prove, that neither an *assent* nor a *reliance* justifies, nor both of them together, still you do not prove, that we are not justified by faith, even by faith alone. But how do you prove, that we cannot be justified by faith as a reliance on the promises? Thus, "Such a reliance must be founded

* Homily on the Salvation of Man.

on a consciousness of having performed the conditions. And a reliance so founded is the result of works wrought *through faith*." No: of works wrought *without faith*: else the argument implies a contradiction. For it runs thus, (on the supposition that *faith* and *reliance* were synonymous terms,) such a reliance is the result of works wrought through such a reliance.

5. Your fourth argument against justification by faith alone, is drawn from the *nature* of justification. This, you observe, "implies a prisoner at the bar, and a law by which he is to be tried; and this is not the law of Moses, but that of Christ, requiring repentance and faith, with their proper fruits," (p. 16,) which now, through the blood of Christ, are accepted and 'counted for righteousness.' St. Paul affirms this, concerning faith, in the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. But where does he say, that either repentance or its fruits are counted for righteousness? Nevertheless, I allow, that the law of Christ requires such repentance and faith before justification, as, if there be opportunity, will bring forth the 'fruits of righteousness.' But if there be not, he that repents and believes is justified notwithstanding. Consequently, these alone are necessary, *indispensably necessary* conditions of our justification.

6. Your last argument against justification by faith alone, "is drawn from the method of God's proceeding at the last day. He will then judge every man 'according to his works.' If, therefore, works wrought through faith are the ground of the sentence passed upon us in that day, then are they a necessary condition of our justification:" (p. 19.) in other words, "if they are a condition of our *final*, they are a condition of our *present* justification." I cannot allow the consequence. All holiness must precede our entering into glory. But no holiness can exist, till 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

7. You next attempt to reconcile the writings of St. Paul with justification by works. In order to this you say, "in the three first chapters of his epistle to the Romans, he

proves that both Jews and Gentiles must have recourse to the gospel of Christ. To this end he convicts the whole world of sin. And having 'stopped every mouth,' he makes his inference, 'Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified. We conclude,' then, says he, 'a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.' But here arise two questions, first, What are the works excluded from justifying? Secondly, What is the faith which justifies?" p. 20, 21, 22.

"The works excluded are Heathen and Jewish works, set up as meritorious. This is evident from hence, that Heathens and carnal Jews are the persons against whom he is arguing." Not so: he is arguing against all mankind: he is 'convicting *the whole* world of sin.' His concern is, to *stop every mouth*, by proving, that *no flesh*, none born of a woman, no child of man can *be justified by his own works*. Consequently he speaks of *all* the works of *all* mankind, antecedent to justification, whether Jewish or any other, whether supposed *meritorious* or not, of which the text says not one word. Therefore *all works* antecedent to justification are excluded, and faith is set in *flat opposition* to them. 'Unto him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.'

"But what is the faith to which he attributes justification? That which worketh by love: which is the same with the new creature, and implies in it the keeping the commandments of God."

It is undoubtedly true, that nothing avails for our final salvation without καινη κτισις, *a new creation*, and consequent thereon, a sincere, uniform keeping of the commandments of God. This St. Paul constantly declares. But where does he say, This is the condition of our justification? In the epistles to the Romans and Galatians particularly, he vehemently asserts the contrary; earnestly maintaining, that nothing is *absolutely necessary* to this, but *believing in him that justifieth the ungodly*: not the godly; not him that is already a *new creature*, that previously *keeps* all the com-

mandments of God. He does this *afterward:* when he is justified by faith, then his faith *worketh by love.* 'Therefore there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' justified by faith in him, provided they 'walk in him whom they have received, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' But should they turn back, and walk again after the flesh, they would again be under condemnation. But this no way proves, that *walking after the Spirit* was the condition of their justification. (p. 23.) Neither will any thing like this follow, from the apostle's saying to the Corinthians, 'Though I had all faith, so as to remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' This only proves, that *miracle-working* faith may be, where *saving* faith is not.

8. To the argument. St. Paul says, 'Abraham was justified by faith,' you answer, "St. James says, 'Abraham was justified by works,'" (p. 24.) True: but he neither speaks of the same *justification*, nor the same faith, nor the same works. Not of the same justification; for St. Paul speaks of that justification which was five and twenty years before Isaac was born: (Gen xii.) St. James of that wherewith he was justified when he *offered up Isaac* on the altar. It is *living* faith, whereby St. Paul affirms we are justified: it is *dead* faith, whereby St. James affirms, we are not justified. St. Paul speaks of *works* antecedent to justification: St. James of *works* consequent upon it. This is the plain, easy, natural way of reconciling the two apostles.

The fact was manifestly this: 1. When Abraham dwelt in Haran, being then seventy-five years old, God called him thence: he 'believed God, and he counted it to him for righteousness.' That is, he was *justified by faith*, as St. Paul strenuously asserts. 2. Many years after Isaac was born, (some of the ancients thought, three and thirty,) Abraham 'shewing his faith by his works,' offered him up upon the altar. 3. Here the faith by which, in St. Paul's sense, he was justified long before, 'wrought together with his works,' and he was justified in St. James's sense, that is, (as the

apostle explains his own meaning,) 'by works his faith was made perfect.' God confirmed, increased, and perfected the principle from which those works sprang.

9. Drawing to a conclusion you say, "What pity so many volumes should have been written upon the question, whether a man be justified by faith or works, seeing they are two essential parts of the same thing!" (p. 25.) If by works you understand inward and outward holiness, both faith and works are essential parts of Christianity: and yet they are essentially different, and by God himself contradistinguished from each other. And that in the very question before us, *him that* worketh not, but believeth. Therefore, whether a man be justified by faith or works, is a point of the last importance: otherwise our reformers could not have answered to God, their spending so much time upon it. Indeed they were both too wise and too good men, to have "written so many volumes" on a trifling or needless question.

10. If in speaking on this important point, (such at least it appears to *me*,) I have said any thing offensive, any that implies the least degree of anger or disrespect, it was entirely foreign to my intention: nor indeed have I any provocation. I have no room to be angry at your maintaining what you believe to be the truth of the gospel: even tho' I might wish you had omitted a few expressions,

Quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura.

In the general, from all I have heard concerning you, I cannot but very highly esteem you in love. And that God may give you both "a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort," is the prayer of,

Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate Brother and Servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

SOME

REMARKS

ON A

DEFENCE OF THE PREFACE TO THE EDINBURGH EDITION OF ASPASIO VINDICATED.

EDINBURGH, MAY, 1766.

I HAVE neither time, nor inclination, to write a formal answer to the Reverend Dr. Erskine's tract. My hope of convincing him is lost. he has drunk in all the spirit of the book he has published. But I owe it to God and his children, to say something for myself, when I am attacked in so violent a manner, if haply some may take knowledge, that I also endeavour to 'live honestly, and to serve God.'

1. Dr. Erskine says, "An edition of these letters has been published in London, from the author's own manuscripts, which puts the authenticity of them beyond doubt." I answer, This is a mistake; impartial men doubt of their authenticity as much as ever. (I mean, not with regard to the letters in general, but to many particular passages.) And that for two reasons. First, because those passages breathe an acrimony and bitterness, which Mr. Hervey in his life-time never shewed to any one, and least of all to one he was deeply obliged to. Surely *this* is not what Dr. E. terms his "scriptural and *animated manner*." I hope it was not for *this cause*, that he pronounces this "equal, if

not superior to any one of his controversial pieces published in his life-time." Indeed, I know of no controversial piece at all which he published in his life-time. His *Dialogues* he no more intended for such, than his *Meditations among the Tombs*. A second reason for doubting of their authenticity is, that he told his brother, with his dying voice, (I have it under his brother's own hand,) "I desire my letters may not be published: because great part of them is written in a short-hand, which none but myself can read."

11. But the present question lies, not between me and Mr. Hervey, but between Dr. E. and me. He vehemently attacks me, for saying, 'Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is at best, but a very slender part of religion, if any part of it at all.' He labours to deduce the most frightful consequences from it, and cries, "If once men believe, that right opinion is a slender part of religion, if any part of religion, or no part at all, there is scarce any thing so foolish, or so wicked, which Satan may not prompt to," (p. 6.) And what if, after all, Dr. E. himself believes the very same thing? I am much mistaken if he does not. Let us now fairly make the trial.

I assert, 1. That, in some cases '*right opinion* is no part of religion:' in other words, there may be right opinion, where there is no religion. I instance, in the devil. Has he not right opinions? Dr. E. must, per force, say, Yes. Has he religion? Dr. E. must say, No. Therefore, here right opinion is *no part* of religion. Thus far then Dr. E. himself believes as I do.

I assert, 2. In some cases, 'It is a slender part of religion." Observe, I speak of *right opinion*, as contra-distinguished both from *right tempers* and from *right words and actions*. Of this, I say, 'it is a slender part of religion.' And can Dr. E. say otherwise? Surely, no: nor any man living, unless he be brimful of the spirit of contradiction.

"Nay, but I affirm, *right tempers* cannot subsist without *right opinion*: the love of God, for instance, cannot subsist

without a right opinion of him." I have never said any thing to the contrary: but this is another question. Though *right tempers* cannot subsist without *right opinion*, yet *right opinion* may subsist without *right tempers*. There may be a right opinion of God, without either love, or one right temper toward him. Satan is a proof of it. All therefore that I assert in this matter, Dr. E. must affirm too.

But does it hence follow, "that ignorance and error are as friendly to virtue as just sentiments?" Or, that any man may "disbelieve the bible with perfect innocence or safety?" Does Dr. E. himself think I believe this? I take upon me to say, he does not think so. But why does he talk as if he did? "Because it is a clear consequence from your own assertion." I answer, 1. If it be, that consequence is as chargeable on Dr. E. as on me: since he must, *nolens volens*, assert the same thing, unless he will dispute through a stone wall. 2. This is no consequence at all. For admitting "*right tempers* cannot subsist without *right opinions*," you cannot infer, therefore *right opinions* cannot subsist without *right tempers*." Prove this by other mediums, if you can: but it will never be proved by this. However, until this is done, I hope to hear no more of this thread-bare objection.

III. Dr. E. attacks me, Secondly, with equal vehemence, on the head of *Justification*. In various parts of his tract, he flatly charges me with holding *justification* by works. In support of this charge, he cites several sentences out of various treatises, abridgments of which I have occasionally published within these thirty years. As I have not those abridgments by me now, I suppose the citations are fairly made: and that they are exactly made, without any mistake, either designed or undesigned. I will suppose likewise, that some of these expressions, gleaned up from several tracts, are indefensible. And what is it which any unprejudiced person can infer from this? Will any candid man judge of my sentiments, either on this, or any other head, from a few sentences of other men, (though reprinted by me, after premising, that I did not approve of *all their expressions*,) or from my own avowed, explicit

declarations repeated over and over? Yet this is the way by which Dr. E. proves, that I hold justification by works! He continually cites the words of those authors as *mine*, telling his reader, "Mr. Wesley says thus and thus." I do not say so; and no man can prove it, unless by citing *my own words*. I believe justification by faith alone, as much as I believe there is a God. I declared this in a sermon preached before the university of Oxford, eight and twenty years ago. I declared it to all the world eighteen years ago, in a sermon written expressly on the subject. I have never varied from it, no, not an hair's breadth, from 1738 to this day. Is it not strange, then, that at this time of day any one should face me down, (yea, and one who has that very volume in his hands, wherein that sermon on justification by faith is contained,) that I hold justification by works? And that, truly, because there are some expressions in some tracts written by other men, but reprinted by me during a course of years, which seem (at least) to countenance that doctrine! Let it suffice, (and it will suffice for every impartial man,) that I absolutely, once for all, renounce every expression which contradicts that fundamental truth, *We are justified by faith alone.*

"But you have published John Goodwin's Treatise on Justification." I have so: but I have not undertaken to defend every expression which occurs therein. Therefore none has a right to palm them upon the world as *mine*. And yet I desire no one will condemn that treatise before he has carefully read it over; and that seriously and carefully; for it can hardly be understood by a slight and cursory reading. And let whoever has read it declare, whether he has not proved every article he asserts, not only by plain express Scripture, but by the authority of the most eminent Reformers. If Dr. E. thinks otherwise, let him confute him; but let no man condemn what he cannot answer.

IV. Dr. E. attacks me, thirdly, on the head of *Christian Perfection*. It is not my design to enter into the merits of the cause. I would only just observe, 1. That the great argument which Dr. E. brings against it, is of no force; and

2. That he misunderstands and misrepresents my sentiments on the subject.

First, His great argument against it is of no force. It runs thus "Paul's contention with Barnabas, is a strong argument against the attainableness of perfection in this life," (p. 41.) True, if we judge by the *bare sound* of the English version. But Dr. E. reads the original: *και εγενετο παροξυσμος*. It does not say, that *sharpness* was on *both sides*. It does not say, that all or any part of it was on St. Paul's side. Neither does the context prove, that he was in any fault at all. Indeed, 'he thought it not good to take him with them,' who had deserted them before. Now certainly there was no blame in this: neither was there any in his subsequent behaviour. For when Barnabas also departed from it, he went on still in the work. 'He went through Syria and Cilicia,' as he had proposed, 'confirming the churches.'

Secondly, He misunderstands and misrepresents my sentiments on the subject. He says, "Mr. Wesley seems to maintain, that sinless perfection is actually attained by every one born of God," p. 39.

I do not maintain this. I do not believe it. I believe Christian perfection or *perfect love*, (*sinless perfection*, is an expression which I do not use or contend for,) is not attained by any of the children of God, till they are what the apostle John terms *fathers*. And this I expressly declare in that very sermon which Dr. E. so largely quotes.

IV. Why Dr. E should quarrel with me concerning *natural free-will*, I cannot conceive, unless for quarrelling's sake. For it is certain on this head, if no other, we are precisely of one mind. I believe that Adam before his fall had such *freedom of will*, that he might choose either good or evil; but that since the fall no child of man has a natural power to choose any thing that is truly good. Yet I know (and who does not?) that man has still freedom of will in things of an indifferent nature. Does not Dr. E. agree with me in this? O why should we *seek* occasion of contention?

V. That Michael Servetus was "one of the wildest antitrinitarians that ever appeared," is by no means clear. I doubt of it, on the authority of Calvin himself, who certainly was not prejudiced in his favour. For if Calvin does not misquote his words, he was no antitrinitarian at all. Calvin himself gives a quotation from one of his letters, in which he expressly declares, "I do believe the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. But I dare not use the word *Trinity* or *Person*." I dare, and I think them very good words. But I should think it very hard to be burnt alive for not using them: especially with a slow fire, made of moist, green wood!

I believe Calvin was a great instrument of God; and that he was a wise and pious man. But I cannot but advise those who love his memory to let Servetus alone. Yet if any one resolves to understand the whole affair, he may see a circumstantial account of it, published some years since by Dr. Chandler, an eminent Presbyterian divine in London.

VI. Of myself I shall speak a little by and by. But I would now speak of the Methodists, so called, in general. Concerning these, Dr. E. cites the following words, from a little tract, published some years since.*

"We look upon ourselves, not as the authors or ringleaders of a particular sect or party, but as messengers of God to those who are Christians in name, but Heathens in heart and life, to call them back to that from which they are fallen, to real, genuine Christianity."—"We look upon the Methodists, not as any particular party, but as living witnesses, in and to every party, of that Christianity which we preach," p. 3.

On this Dr. E. remarks, "If the Methodist teachers confined themselves to preaching, there might be some room for this plea: but hardly, when they form bands and classes:" that is, when they advise those who are "recalled to real Christianity" to watch over each other, lest they fall

* Advice to the People called Methodists.

again into the nominal religion, or no religion, that surrounds them. But how does this alter the case? What, if being jealous, *lest any of* their brethren should again *be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, they should *exhort one another*, not only weekly, but daily, to cleave to God *with full purpose of heart?* Why might we not plead still, that these are not to "be looked upon as any particular party, but as living witnesses, in and to every party, of that Christianity which we preach?"

What Dr. E. says of the mischievousness of this, and with great plausibility, (p. 27,) depends upon an entire mistake, namely, that the leader of a class acts just like a Romish priest; and that the inquiries made in a class are of the same kind with those made in *auricular* confession. It all therefore falls to the ground at once, when it is observed, that there is no resemblance at all, either between the *leader* and the *priest*, or between the inquiries made by one and by the other.

It is true, that the leader "sees each person once a week, to inquire how their souls prosper." And that when they meet, "the leader or teacher asks each a few questions relating to the present situation of their minds." So then, that *questions* are actually asked, yea, and *inquiries* made, cannot be denied. But what kind of questions or inquiries? None that expose the answerer to any danger: none that they would scruple to answer before Dr. E. or any other person that fears God.

VII. "But you form a church within a church, whose members in South Britain profess to belong to the Church of England, and those in North Britain to the Church of Scotland, while yet they are inspected and governed by teachers who are sent, continued, or removed by Mr. W." p. 3.

All this is, in a certain sense, very true. But let us see what all this amounts to. You "form a church within a church:" that is, you raise up and join together witnesses of real Christianity, not among Mahometans and Pagans, but *within a church* by law established. Certainly so. And

that church, if she knew her own interest, would see she is much obliged to us for so doing. "But the Methodists in South Britain profess to belong to the Church of England." They profess the truth: for they do belong to it; that is, all who did so before the change was wrought, not in their external mode of worship, but in their tempers and lives. "Nay, but those in Scotland profess to belong to the Church of Scotland." And they likewise profess the truth. For they do belong to it as they did before. And is there any harm in this?

"But they are still inspected by Mr. W. and his preachers." And they think this both their duty and their privilege: namely, to be still instructed, and built up in faith and love, by those who were the instruments, in God's hand, of bringing them from dead, formal religion, to 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' But still those teachers are so careful, not to withdraw them from the church to which they belong, not to make any division, that they neither baptize, nor administer the Lord's Supper. If I were desirous to form a separate party, I should do both without delay.

VIII. I come now to add a few words, without any preface or ceremony, concerning myself.

Dr. E. affirms, first, That I am a very knave; and, secondly, That I am in a state of damnation. As to the first, he says, "Truth and honesty choose to enter openly and undisguised. 'He that entereth not by the door' of a plain, simple declaration of his sentiments, but insinuates himself by concealing his opinions, 'the same is a thief and a robber,'" p. 5. We have more to the same purpose. "Upon mature reflection, I saw no cause to flatter myself, that I could procure from him satisfaction as to what offended me.—He had discovered himself no novice in the *arts* of subtlety and disguise," p. 24. Again, "I find little else than that shifting at which Mr. W. is so singularly expert." This is as genteel as to say, "Sir, you lie:" and it is just as strong an argument. It is indeed mere common-

place, with which a man fond of such flowers may embellish his page on any occasion.

But what room is there for it on this occasion? By God's help, I will sift this matter thoroughly. And I trust no gentleman or scholar, who weighs what I say, will throw this dirt in my face any more.

For several years I was moderator in the disputations which were held six times a week at Lincoln College in Oxford. I could not avoid acquiring hereby some degree of *expertness* in arguing: and especially in discerning and pointing out well-covered and plausible fallacies. I have since found abundant reason to praise God for giving me this *honest art*. By this, when men have hedged me in, by what they called *demonstrations*, I have been many times able to dash them in pieces: in spite of all its covers, to touch the very point where the fallacy lay: and it flew open in a moment. This is the *art* which I have used with Bishop Warburton, as well as in the preceding pages. When Dr. E. twisted truth and falsehood together, in many of his propositions, it was by this *art* I untwisted the one from the other, and shewed just how far each was true. At doing this, I bless God, I am *expert*: as those will find, who attack me without rhyme or reason. But *shifting*, *subtlety*, and *disguise*, I despise and abhor, fully as much as Dr. E. And if *he cannot* see, that I have answered Bishop Warburton plainly and directly, and so untwisted his arguments, that no man living will be able to piece them together, I believe all unprejudiced men can and are thoroughly convinced of it.

Let any candid man review the last article, and he will see another instance of this. Dr. E. had given us a long paragraph, about "forming a church within a church." It is to the same effect with the objection which the warm churchmen have often urged against the dissenters in England. It sounds extremely plausible, and the parts of it are carefully knit together. But it is not a *gordian* knot: a man moderately *expert* in arguing may untie it. And

when the threads are separate, it plainly appears to have been fine, but not strong.

As to the Second point, I cannot at all complain of Dr. E.'s want of openness. He speaks plain and downright: "Seeming strictness of behaviour will not justify those who forget"—"there is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof is *the way of death*," (p. 46.)

Again. "What claim can he have to genuine Christianity, whose professed experience *gives God the lie?*" "Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also?" "It is a deadly charity that flatters men with a persuasion that they are in the way of life, whom the Scripture pronounces *in a way of destruction*."

Dr. E.'s charity is of another kind! It is Mr. Sandiman's charity! It reminds me of the charity of an Antinomian in London, one, I mean, who was newly recovered from that delusion: "Sir, said she, last week, I would not have been content to *kill* you, if I could not have *damned* you too." I pray God to deliver me from such charity! Charity, cruel as the grave!

But what right have I to complain of Dr. E.? He has no obligation to me. My speaking of him every where as I have done, was a point of justice, not of friendship. I had only the desire, but not the power of doing him any kindness. I could not say to him, 'Nevertheless thou owest me thine own soul also.' I have it not under Dr. E.'s hand, as I have under Mr. Hervey's, 'Shall I call you my *father*, or my *friend?* You have been both to me.' If those related to me by so near, so tender ties, thus furiously rise up against me, how much more may a stranger, one of another nation? 'O Absalom, my son, my son!'

POSTSCRIPT.

IN his twenty-first page, Dr. E. says, "How far Mr. Wesley's letter was an answer to any thing material in the

Preface, the reader will best judge by perusing it." I have annexed it here, that the reader may judge, whether it is not an answer to one very material thing, namely, the charge of "*concealing* my sentiments," for which Dr. E. condemns me in the keenest manner, and on which very account he makes no scruple to pronounce me *a thief and a robber*. I need only premise, that I wrote it not out of fear, (as perhaps Dr. E. thought,) neither in guile; but merely out of love to him, and concern for the cause of God. I desire no *favour* from him or any opponent: do me *justice*, and I ask no more.

EDINBURGH, APRIL 24, 1765.

REV. SIR,

BETWEEN thirty and forty years I have had the world upon me, speaking all manner of evil. And I expected no less, as God had called me to testify that its deeds were evil. But the children of God were not upon me; nor did I expect they would. I rather hoped they would take knowledge, that all my designs, and thought, and care, and labour, were directed to this one point, to advance the Kingdom of Christ upon earth. And so many of them did, however differing from me both in opinions and modes of worship. I have the pleasure to mention Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Watts, and Mr. Wardrobe, in particular. How then was I surprised, as well as concerned, that a child of the same Father, a servant of the same Lord, a member of the same family, and (as to the essence of it) a preacher of the same gospel, should, without any provocation that I know of, declare open war against me! I was the more surprised, because you had told me some months since, that you would favour me with a letter. And had this been done, I make no doubt but you would have received full satisfaction. Instead of this, you ushered into this part of the world, one of the most bitter libels that was ever written against me: written by a dying man, (so far as it was written by poor, well-meaning Mr. Hervey,) with a trembling hand, just as he was tottering on the margin of the grave.

A great warrior resigned his crown, because 'there should be some interval, he said, between fighting and death.' But Mr. Hervey, who had been a man of peace all his life, began a war not six months before he died. He drew his sword, when he was just putting off his body. He then fell on one to whom he had the deepest obligations, (as his own letters, which I have now in my hands, testify) on one who had never *intentionally* wronged him, who had never spoken an unkind word of him, or to him, and who loved him as his own child. O tell it not in Gath! The good Mr. Hervey (if these letters were his) died cursing his spiritual Father.

And these letters another good man, Mr. ——, has introduced into Scotland, and warmly recommended. Why have you done this? "Because you have *concealed* your principles, which is palpably *dishonesty*."

When I was first invited into Scotland, (about fourteen years ago,) Mr. Whitefield told me, 'You have no business there: for your principles are so well known, that if you spoke like an angel, none would hear you: And if they did, you would have nothing to do but to *dispute* with one and another from morning to night.'

I answered, 'If God sends me, people will hear. And I will give them no provocation to dispute: for I will studiously avoid controverted points, and keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity. And if any still begin to dispute, they may: but I will not dispute with them.'

I came. Hundreds and thousands flocked to hear. But I was enabled to keep my word. I avoided whatever might engender strife, and insisted upon the grand points, the religion of the heart, and salvation by faith, at all times, and in all places. And by this means, I have cut off all occasion of dispute, from the first day to this very hour. And this you amazingly improve into a fault: construe into a proof of *dishonesty*. You likewise charge me with holding *unsound principles*, and with saying, 'right opinions are (sometimes) no part of religion.'

The last charge I have answered over and over, and very lately to Bishop Warburton. Certainly had you read that single tract, you would never have repeated that stale objection.

As to my principles, every one knows, or may know, that I believe the thirty-first article of the Church of England. But can none be saved who believe this? I know you will not say so. Mean time, in the main point, justification by faith, I have not wavered a moment for these seven and twenty years. And I allow all which Mr. Hervey himself contends for, in his entrance upon the subject, "Come to Jesus as a *needy beggar:* hang upon him as a *devoted pensioner.*" And whoever does this, I will be bold to say, shall not perish everlastingly.

As to your main objection, convince me that it is my duty to preach on controverted subjects, predestination in particular, and I will do it. At present, I think it would be a sin. I think it would create still more divisions. And are there not enough already? I have seen a book written by one who styles himself, *Ecclesiæ direptæ et gementis Presbyter.* Shall *I* tear *ecclesiam direptam et gementem?* God forbid! No; I will, so far as I can, heal her breaches. And if you really love her, (as I doubt not you do) why should you hinder me from so doing? Has she so many friends and helpers left, that you should strive to lessen their number? Would you wish to turn any of her friends, even though weak and mistaken, into enemies? If you must contend, have you not Arians, Socinians, Seceders, Infidels, to contend with? To say nothing of whoremongers, adulterers, sabbath-breakers, drunkards, common swearers! *O ecclesia gemens!* And will you pass by all these, and single out *me* to fight with? Nay, but *I* will not. I do and will fight with all these, but not with *you.* I cannot: I dare not. You are the son of my Father; my fellow-labourer in the gospel of his dear Son. I love your person: I love your character: I love the work wherein you are engaged. And if you will still

shoot at me, (because Mr. Hervey has painted me as a monster) even with arrows drawn from bishop Warburton's quiver, (how unfit for Mr. ——'s hand!) I can only say, as I always did before, the Lord Jesus bless you in your soul, in your body, in your relations, in your work, in whatever tends to his own glory!

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

A

LETTER

TO THE

REVEREND DR. RUTHERFORTH

March 28, 1768.

Rev. Sir,

1. Your charges, published five years ago, I did not see till yesterday. In the fourth I am unconcerned. The three former I purpose now to consider: and I do it the more cheerfully, because they are written with such seriousness as becomes the importance of the subject, and with less tartness than I am accustomed to expect from opponents of every kind.

2. But before I enter on the subject, suffer me to remove a stumbling-block or two out of the way. You frequently charge me with *evasion*: and others have brought the same charge. The plain case is this: I have written on various heads, and always as clearly as I could. Yet many have misunderstood my words, and raised abundance of objections. I answered them, by explaining myself, shewing what I did not mean, and what I did. One and another of the objectors stretched his throat, and cried out, "Evasion! Evasion!" And what does all this outcry amount to? Why exactly thus much. They imagined they had tied me so fast, that it was impossible for me to escape. But presently the cobwebs were swept away, and I was quite at

liberty. And I bless God I can unravel truth and falsehood, although artfully twisted together. Of *such evasion* I am not ashamed. Let them be ashamed who constrain me to use it.

3. You charge me likewise, and that more than once or twice, with *maintaining contradictions.* I answer, 1. If all my sentiments were compared together, from the year 1725 to 1768, there would be truth in the charge: for during the latter part of this period, I have relinquished several of my former sentiments. 2. During these last thirty years, I may have varied in some of my sentiments or expressions without observing it. 3. I will not undertake to defend all the expressions which I have occasionally used during this time: but must desire men of candour to make allowance for those,

Quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura.

4. It is not strange if among these inaccurate expressions, there are some *seeming* contradictions: especially considering I was answering so many different objectors, frequently attacking me at once: and one pushing this way, another that, with all the violence they were able. Nevertheless, 5. I believe there will be found few, if any, *real* contradictions, in what I have published for near thirty years.

5. I come now to your particular objections. I begin with the subject of your third charge, *Assurances:* because what I have to say upon this head, will be comprised in few words. Some are fond of the expression, I am not: I hardly ever use it. But I will simply declare (having neither leisure nor inclination to draw the sword of controversy concerning it) what are my present sentiments with regard to the *thing*, which is usually meant thereby.

I believe a few, but very few Christians have an assurance from God of everlasting salvation: and that is the thing which the apostle terms, *the plerophory*, or *full assurance of hope.*

I believe more have such an assurance of being *now* in the favour of God, as excludes all doubt and fear. And

this, if I do not mistake, the apostle means by *the plerophory* or *full assurance of faith.*

I believe a consciousness of being in the favour of God, (which I do not term *plerophory*, or *full assurance*, since it is frequently weakened, nay, perhaps interrupted, by returns of doubt or fear,) is the common privilege of Christians, fearing God and working righteousness.

Yet I do not affirm, there are no exceptions to this general rule. Possibly some may be in the favour of God, and yet go mourning all the day long. (But I believe this is usually owing either to disorder of body, or ignorance of the gospel promises.)

Therefore I have not for many years thought a consciousness of acceptance to be essential to justifying faith.

And after I have thus explained myself, once for all, I think without any evasion or ambiguity, I am sure without any self-contradiction, I hope all reasonable men will be satisfied. And whoever will still dispute with me on this head, must do it for disputing's sake.

II. 1. In your first charge you undertake to prove, that "Christianity does not reject the aid of human learning." p. 1.

Mr. B— thinks it does. But I am not accountable for him, from whom in this I totally differ. Yet you certainly include *me* when you say, "These *new reformers* maintain, that every believer who has the gift of utterance, is qualified to preach the gospel," (p. 2.) I never maintained this. On many occasions I have maintained quite the contrary. I never said, "Human learning is an impediment to a divine, which will keep him from the knowledge of the truth," (p. 3.) When, therefore, you say, "The contempt with which *these men* treat human learning," (ib.) you do me much injustice: as likewise when you say, "They agree that human learning is of no use at all to a preacher of the gospel." I do not agree with any who speak thus. Yet you cite my own writings to prove it. (Farther Appeal, Part III.) If I say any such thing either there or any where else, let me bear the blame for ever.

2. For my deliberate thoughts on human learning, I appeal to my *Serious Address to the Clergy*. I there lay down *ex professo* the qualifications, the learning in particular, which (as I apprehend) every clergyman who *can* have, *ought* to have. And if any who are educated at the university have it not, they are inexcusable before God and man.

To put this matter beyond dispute, I appeal to something more than words. Can any man seriously think, I despise learning, who has ever heard of the school at Kingswood? Especially if he knows, with how much care, and expense, and labour, I have kept it on foot for these twenty years? Let him but read "the Rules of Kingswood School," and he will urge this objection no more.

3. But you "employ illiterate preachers." I cannot answer this better, than by transcribing the very page to which you refer.

* 'It will easily be observed, that I do not depreciate learning of any kind. The knowledge of the languages is a valuable talent; so is the knowledge of the arts and sciences. Both the one and the other may be employed to the glory of God, and the good of men. But yet I ask, Where hath God declared in his word, that he cannot, or will not make use of men that have it not? Has Moses, or any of the prophets affirmed this? Or our Lord, or any of his apostles? You are sensible, all these are against you. You know the apostles themselves, all except St. Paul, were ανδρες αγραμματοι και ιδιωται, *common, unphilosophical, unlettered men.*'

4. Suffer me to add that paragraph, from which you strangely infer, that I hold learning to be of "no use at all to a preacher."

'I am bold to affirm, that these unlettered men have help from God for that great work, the saving souls from death; seeing he hath enabled, and doth enable them still, to turn many to righteousness. Thus hath he destroyed the

* My words are marked with single commas.

wisdom of the wise, and brought to nought the understanding of the prudent. When they imagined they had effectually shut the door, and blocked up every passage, whereby any help could come to two or three preachers, weak in body as well as soul; who, they might reasonably believe would, humanly speaking, wear themselves out in a short time: when they had gained their point, by securing (as they supposed) all the men of learning in the nation; he that sitteth in heaven laughed them to scorn, and came upon them by a way they thought not of. Out of the stones he raised up those who should beget children to Abraham. We had no more foresight of this than you. Nay, we had the deepest prejudices against it: until we could not but own, that God gave wisdom from above to these unlearned and ignorant men; so that the work of the Lord prospered in their hand, and sinners were daily converted to God.

'Indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the university, (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love,) are able to do. But, oh! what manner of examination do most of those candidates go through? And what proof are the testimonials commonly brought, (as solemn as the form is wherein they run,) either of the piety or knowledge of those to whom are intrusted those sheep which God hath purchased with his own blood!'

5. Yet you cite this very paragraph to prove that I "intimate the help which these illiterate men receive from God, is such as will enable them to preach Christ's gospel, without reading the Scriptures." (p. 9.) Adding, "St. Paul's command to Timothy is a sufficient confutation of this groundless, or rather impious pretence." I cannot conceive, how you could imagine those words to intimate any such thing. Be this pretence whose it will, it is none of mine; it never entered into my thoughts.

6. But "there are in the Scriptures 'things hard to be

understood.' And is every unlettered mechanic able to explain them?" (p. 11.) No surely. But may we not likewise ask, Is *every clergyman* able to explain them? You will not affirm it. However, "they are the safest guides, who from their childhood have known the holy Scriptures, and have diligently and faithfully made use of all the helps to understand them, which a liberal education has put into their hands; who have given attendance to reading, have meditated on those things, and have given themselves wholly to them," p. 11.

Certainly these are the safest guides. But how many, Sir, do you know of *these*? Suppose there are thirty thousand clergymen in England, can you vouch this for ten thousand of them? I remember his late Grace of Canterbury (I mean Archbishop Potter) was occasionally saying, that on searching the records, he could find only three hundred of the clergy who stood out against Popery in queen Mary's reign. Do you think the other twenty nine thousand seven hundred were "the safest guides?" I hope indeed things are mended now. I see no reason to doubt, but there are among the present clergy a far greater number both of learned and pious men. And yet I fear, we cannot count many thousands now, that answer your strong description. May our good Lord increase their number, how many soever they be!

7. Now I beg leave to ask a question in my turn. Which do you think is the safest guide, a cursing, swearing, drinking clergyman, (that such there are you know,) or a tradesman, who has in fact "from his childhood known the holy Scriptures," and has for five years (to say no more) faithfully "and diligently made use of all the helps which the English tongue has put into his hands; who has *given attendance to reading*, has *meditated on these things*, and *given himself wholly to them*? Can any reasonable man doubt one moment which is the safest guide?

Certainly, "those who want these qualifications," who do not give attendance to reading, who do not meditate on

those things, yea, and give themselves wholly to them, are *ignorant and unstable men*, in the very bad sense of the words. And let them understand philosophy ever so well, and be ever such critics in Greek and Hebrew, "they will pervert the Scriptures, when they pretend to interpret them," (p. 12,) and that not only to *their own* destruction.

8. But "many of these strolling preachers are so ignorant, as not to know, that the Scriptures were not written in their mother tongue," (p. 8.) Indeed they are not: whoever gave you that information, abused your credulity: most of the travelling preachers in connexion with me, are not ignorant men. As I observed before, they know all which they profess to know. The languages they do not profess to know: yet some of them understand them well. Philosophy they do not profess to know: yet some of them tolerably understand this also. They understand both one and the other better than great part of my pupils at the university did. And yet these were not inferior to their fellow collegians of the same standing: (which I could not but know, having daily intercourse with all the under-graduates, either as Greek-lecturer or moderator.) Nor were these inferior to the under-graduates of other colleges.

9. You conclude this charge, For "those whose minds are not stored with useful literature, the wisdom of the public has provided such guides as are both able and willing to shew them the right way," (p. 13.) Would to God it had! But is it really so? Is there such a guide in every parish in England? Are then all the rectors, vicars, and curates, therein, "both able and willing" to guide all their parishioners to heaven? Do not both you, and I, and all the world, know, that this is not the case? Are there not many, who are utterly unable to guide others; having neither learning nor understanding to guide themselves? Are there not more, who, if they are able, are not willing, taking no care, or thought about it? They eat, and drink, and rise up to play:

"And leave to tatter'd crape the drudgery of prayer."

Once more. Are there not too many of those guides,

"whom the wisdom of the public has provided," who are neither able nor willing to guide others in the right way, being equally void of knowledge and piety? Is it then "the duty of the people to continue in the things which they have learned" from these guides? And "to hold fast the faithful word as they have been taught?" Why, what have they been taught? Just nothing. From these guides they have learned nothing, nor could learn any thing, either from their precept or example. And are they "then only in danger when they do not follow these guides?" If they do follow them, they must follow them to hell. O, Sir, why will you constrain me to shew the nakedness of the land? I would far rather spread a veil over it. And I heartily wish, I may never more be laid under a necessity of touching on this unpleasing subject.

10. Upon the whole, what I believe concerning learning, as I have again and again declared, is this: that it is *highly expedient* for a guide of souls; but not *absolutely necessary*: what I believe to be absolutely necessary is, a faith unfeigned, the love of God and our neighbour, a burning zeal for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, with a heart and life wholly devoted to God. These I judge to be necessary in the highest degree: and next to these, a competent knowledge of Scripture; a sound understanding, a tolerable utterance, and a willingness to be as 'the filth and offscouring of the world.'

III. 1. You entitle your second charge, "An examination of the doctrine of the Methodists, concerning inward feelings." I have explained myself so frequently and so largely upon this head already, that I flattered myself I should scarcely have occasion to do it any more. But as I am still totally misunderstood and misrepresented, I am under a necessity of doing it yet again.

You state the question thus, "Have we any reason to believe, that the mind has an inward feeling, which will enable it to perceive the ordinary influences of God's Spirit, so as to discern from whence they come?" p. 15.

I answer, 1. The fruit of his *ordinary influences* are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness. 2. Whoever has these, *inwardly feels* them. And if he understands his Bible, he discerns from whence they come. Observe, what he inwardly feels, is, *these fruits themselves: whence they come* he learns from the Bible. This is my doctrine concerning *inward feelings*, and has been for above these forty years. And this is clear to any man of common sense: I appeal to all the world, if it is not. Only do not puzzle the cause by a cloud of words, and then lay the blame on me.

2. You state the question again, "What I mean to affirm is, that while the soul is united to such a body, the operations of external things," (say, the operations of the Holy Spirit, for of these we are talking, and of these alone,) "upon some one or more of these organs, excite no inward feeling." (p. 17.) Nay, nor outward neither. He must be a bold man, that will affirm the contrary. If this be all that you mean to affirm, we agree to an hair's breadth.

3. You afterwards open yourself farther. "The mind in its present situation, has no inward sense, by which the influence of external causes," (the influence of the Holy Spirit,) "or the causes themselves," (this is quite another question,) "may be felt or discerned. It then only perceives them, when they affect the organs of the body, so as to raise a sensation in it by their means." p. 22.

Did ever the most illiterate Methodist talk in such a manner as this? "The mind then only perceives the influences of the Holy Spirit, when they affect the organs of the body!" If you say, "I do not mean the Holy Spirit by *external causes*," then you mean and say what is nothing to the purpose. For your very title confines you to the influences of the Holy Spirit: and you are, or should be, speaking of nothing else.

4. You go on, "It is a fundamental principle in the Methodist school, that all who come into it must renounce their reason." Sir, are you awake? Unless you are talking

in your sleep, how can you utter so gross an untruth? It is a fundamental principle with *us*, That to renounce reason is to renounce religion: that religion and reason go hand in hand, and that all irrational religion is false religion. I therefore speak quite "consistently with my own doctrines," when I caution my followers, 'against judging of the Spirit by which any one speaks, by their own *inward feelings*;—because these being of a doubtful nature, may come from God, or may not.' You add, "What therefore shall we think of these inward feelings? They cannot be clear perceptions of the cause from which these affections or sentiments are derived." Who says they are? I never did. *You* cite the words wherein I say just the contrary. 'Whom then doth your arguing reprove?' Do you not 'fight as one that beateth the air?'

5. Mr. W. indeed, "endeavours to explain away the doctrine of the Methodists concerning *inward feelings*." (p. 25.) That is, I plainly tell, what I mean by those expressions. My words run thus. 'By *feeling* I mean, being inwardly conscious of; by the *operations of the Spirit*, I do not mean *the manner* in which he operates, but *the graces* which he operates in a Christian.' And again. 'We believe that love, joy, peace, are inwardly felt, or they have no being; and that men are satisfied they have grace, first by feeling these, and, afterwards, by their outward actions.'

One might imagine, the controversy was now at an end. No: I am not a jot the nearer. For you go on. "If he and his brethren,"—(away with *his brethren:* the point lies between *you* and *me*,) "mean no more than this, why do they speak of this matter in such language, as makes their disciples pretend to have an inward sense, by which they feel, sometimes the power of God, sometimes the Holy Ghost, sometimes Jesus Christ, and by which they can as clearly discern each of these while he acts upon them, as they can discern outward objects by their bodily senses." (p. 26.) So now the matter is out! But who are the men? What are their names? And where do they live? If you know any who pretend to this, I do not: but I know, they

are none of *my* disciples. They never learned it of *me*. I have three grains of common sense, whether you believe it, or not.

6. But you will pin it upon me, whether I will or not; and that by three passages of my own writings. 1. 'Lucy Godshall felt the love of God, *in an unusual manner*.' She did. I mean, *in an unusual degree*. And what will you make of this? 2. "When he examined some of his disciples, and they related their '*feeling* the blood of Christ running upon their arms, or going down their throats, or poured like water upon their breast and heart:' did he tell them, that *these circumstances* were all the dreams of an heated imagination?" I did: I told them, that *these* three *circumstances*, and *several* others of the same kind, were mere dreams, though *some* of those which they then related, *might be* otherwise. I will tell you more: I was so disgusted at them for those dreams, that I expelled them out of the society.

The third passage is this. 'We do speak of grace, (meaning thereby the power of God, which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure,) that it is as perceptible to the heart, (while it confirms, refreshes, purifies, and sheds the love of God abroad therein,) as sensible objects are to the senses.' (p. 27.) I do speak thus. And I mean thereby, that the *comfort* which God administers, not his power distinct from it, the *love* and *purity* which he works, not his *act* of working distinguished from it, are as clearly discernible by the soul, as outward objects by the senses. And I never so much as dreamed, that any one could find any other meaning in the words.

7. I cannot close this subject of *inward feelings* without recurring to the 20th page of your tract. Here you attempt to prove, that "these preachers confine the influences of God's Holy Spirit to themselves and their followers, because," say you, "no one else feels its workings:" "None but they and their followers." Observe: it is not I affirm this but *you*, that "none but Methodists feel the workings of the Spirit." But how will you reconcile this assertion

with the seventeenth article of our church, which teaches, that all 'godly persons feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things?' It is in this sense, and this only, that I did and do assert, all good men 'feel the working of the Holy Spirit.' If any can prove, they do not, I stand condemned: if not, none can condemn me concerning *inward feelings*.

8. You subjoin some reflections on another subject, *bodily emotions* of various kinds. Before we reason upon it, let us state the fact. These outward symptoms are not at all times, nor in all places: for two or three years they were (not constant but) frequent in London, Bristol, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and in a few other places. They sometimes occur still, but not often. And we do not regard whether they occur or not: knowing that the essence of religion, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is quite independent of them.

Upon this you ask, "Are these the fruits of the Spirit?" (p. 31.) I answer, No: Whoever thought they were? You ask, 2, "Are these the marks whereby we may be assured, that they who are thus affected discern its workings?" You answer for me, "They themselves do not believe it. Nay Mr. W. declares, it is his opinion, 'Some of these agonies are from the devil;' and makes no doubt, but it was 'Satan tearing them,' as they were coming to Christ." (p. 33.) But if I myself declare thus, what room was there for the preceding questions? Now certainly you must be quite satisfied. No: you are as far from it as ever! You gravely ask, "What experienced physicians of the souls must these be, who are unable to distinguish the influence of the Holy Ghost, from the tearing of Satan?" Why, Sir, you this instant repeated the very words wherein I *do* distinguish them. "But you ascribe the same symptoms sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other." Indeed I do not. I always ascribe *these* symptoms to Satan tearing them.

9. You add in a marginal note, "Mr. W. sometimes

denies, that he considers these fits as signs of the new birth." I always deny it, if you mean by *signs* any thing more than something which may accidentally attend it. Yet "in some of his writings, he calls these fallings and roarings, by the name of *convictions*. He says, 'Many were wounded deeply: but none were delivered from that painful conviction.' 'Monday 30, Two more were in strong pain, both their souls and bodies being well nigh torn asunder.'" Very true: but in which of these passages do I call *fallings* and *roarings* by the name of *convictions*? Excuse me: if I cannot distinguish God from the devil, I can, at least, distinguish the soul from the body. For do I ever confound *bodily disorders* with *sorrow* or *pain of mind*?

10. However "Mr. W. speaks of these at least as outward signs, that the new birth 'is *working* in those that have them.'" (p. 23.) I speak of them as 'outward symptoms which have often accompanied the inward work of God.' A peculiar instance of this I relate in the first Journal, which you are at the pains to transcribe. And, as you observe, "there are many instances in the same Journal, in which I express myself in the same manner." But what does all this prove? Just what I said before, and not one jot more: I speak of them as 'outward symptoms which have often accompanied the inward work of God.' *Often*, I say, not *always*; not *necessarily*; they may, or they may not. This work may be without those symptoms, and those symptoms may be without this work.

11. But you say, "The following account which he writes to one of his correspondents, will make the matter clear. 'I have seen very many persons changed in a moment, from the spirit of fear, horror, despair, to the spirit of love, joy, peace; and from sinful desires, till then reigning over them, to a pure desire of doing the Will of God. That such a change was then wrought, appears not from their shedding tears only, or falling into fits, or crying out (these are not the fruits or signs whereby I judge,) but from the whole tenor of their lives.'" (p. 33.)

Now I should really imagine this passage proves just the contrary of what you intend. Yea, that it is full and decisive. "But," say you, "though he denies these to be the fruits by which he judges, that this inward change is wrought, yet he looks upon them as signs that it is *working*.'" Yes, in the sense above explained. While God was inwardly *working*, these outward signs *often* appeared: nay, almost daily in Bristol, during the first summer which I spent there.

12. Upon the whole, I declare once for all, (and I hope to be troubled no more upon the subject,) I look upon some of those bodily symptoms, to have been preternatural or diabolical: and others to have been effects which in some circumstances naturally followed from strong and sudden emotions of mind. Those emotions of mind, whether of fear, sorrow, or joy, I believe were chiefly supernatural; springing from the gracious influences of the Spirit of God, which accompanied his word.

13. I believe this is all the answer I need give to the severe accusation you have brought against me: for which I trust men of candour will discern there was not the least foundation. With respect to the first point, *despising learning*, I am utterly clear. None can bring any proof, or shadow of proof, that I do not highly esteem it. With regard to the *assurance of faith and hope*, I have spoken as clearly as I can; and I trust serious men, who have some experience in religion, will not find much to condemn therein. And with respect to *inward feelings*, whoever denies them in the sense wherein alone I defend them, must deny all the life and power of religion, and leave nothing but a dead, empty form. For take away the love of God and our neighbour, the peace of God and joy in the Holy Ghost, or (which comes to the same) deny that they are felt, and what remains but a poor, lifeless shadow?

14. This is what I do, and must contend for. "I thought you had contended for quite another thing." If you had only thought so, or only said so in private conversation, it had been of no great consequence. But it was of conse-

quence, when you not only brought a false accusation against your brother before so venerable an assembly, but also published it to all the world. Surely the first step was enough and more than enough. Was there nothing more important wherewith to entertain the 'stewards of the mysteries of God,' than the mistakes, if they really had been such of the Methodists, so called? Had they no enemies more dangerous than these? Were they not in more imminent danger, if of no outward sin, nothing in their behaviour or conversation unworthy of their calling; yet of neglect, of remissness, of not laying out all their time, and care, and pains, in feeding the sheep which Christ hath purchased with his own blood? Were none of them, in danger of levity, of pride, of passion, of discontent, of covetousness? Were none of them seeking the praise of men more than the praise of God? O Sir, if this was the case of any of them, I will not say how trifling, how insignificant, but how mischievous to these, how fatal, how destructive must a charge of this kind be! By which they were led, not to examine themselves, to consider either their own hearts or ways, but to criticise on others, on those with whom nine in ten had no manner of concern? Surely so solemn an opportunity might be improved to far other purposes! Even to animate every one present, to offer up himself a living sacrifice to God, that so he may be ready to be offered up, on the sacrifice and service of his faith; to have one thing only in his eye, to desire, to aim at nothing else, not honour, not ease, not money, not preferment; but to save his own soul and them that hear him.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your Brother and Servant for Christ's sake,

JOHN WESLEY.

A LETTER

TO THE

REV. MR. BAILY,

OF CORK;

IN ANSWER TO A LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

LIMERICK, JUNE 8, 1750.

REV. SIR,

1. WHY do you not subscribe your name to a performance so perfectly agreeing both as to the matter and form, with the sermons you have been occasionally preaching, for more than a year last past? As to your seeming to disclaim it, by saying once and again, "I am but a plain, simple man;" and, "the doctrine you teach is only a revival of the old antinominian heresy, I think they call it;" I presume it is only a pious fraud. But how came so plain and simple a man, to know the meaning of the Greek word *Philalethes?* Sir, this is not of a piece. If you did not care to own your child, had not you better have subscribed the second (as well as the first) letter* George Fisher?

* The letter thus subscribed was published at Cork, on May 30 last.

2. I confess you have timed your performance well. When the other pointless thing was published, I came unluckily to Cork on the self-same day. But you might now suppose I was at a convenient distance. However, I will not plead this as an excuse, for taking no notice of your last favour: although, to say the truth, I scarce know how to answer it, as you write in a language I am not accustomed to. Both Dr. Tucker, Dr. Church, and all the other gentlemen, who have written to me in public for some years, have written as gentlemen, having some regard to their own, whatever my character was. But as you fight in the dark, you regard not what weapons you use. We are not, therefore, on even terms. I cannot answer you in kind. I am constrained to leave this to your good allies of Blackpool and Fair-lane. *

I shall, first, state the facts, on which the present controversy turns, and then consider the most material parts of your performance.

First, I am to state the facts. But here I am under a great disadvantage, having few of my papers by me. Excuse me, therefore, if I do not give so full an account now, as I may possibly do hereafter; if I only give you for the present the extracts of some papers, which were lately put into my hands.

Thomas Jones, of Cork, merchant, deposes,

That on May 3, 1749, Nicholas Butler, ballad-singer, came before the house of this deponent, and assembled a large mob; that this deponent went to Daniel Crone, Esq. then Mayor of Cork, and desired that he would put a stop to those riots; asking, at the same time, whether he gave the said Butler leave to go about in this manner? That Mr. Mayor said, he neither gave him leave, neither did he hinder him: that in the evening Butler gathered a larger mob than before, and went to the house where the people called Methodists were assembled to hear the word of God, and as they came out, threw dirt and hurt several of them.

* Celebrated parts of Cork.

That on May 4, this deponent with some others, went to the mayor and told what had been done, adding, "If your Worship pleases to speak only three words to Butler, it will all be over:" that the mayor gave his word and honour, "There should be no more of it, he would put an entire stop to it: that, notwithstanding, a larger mob than ever came to the house the same evening: that they threw much dirt and many stones at the people, both while they were in the house, and when they came out: that the mob then fell upon them, both on men and women, with clubs, hangers, and swords, so that many of them were much wounded, and lost a considerable quantity of blood.

That on May 5, this deponent informed the mayor of all, and also that Butler had openly declared, 'There should be a greater mob than ever there was that night:' that the mayor promised he would prevent it: that in the evening Butler did bring a greater mob than ever: that this deponent, hearing the mayor designed to go out of the way, set two men to watch him, and when the riot was begun, went to the alehouse, and inquired for him: that the woman of the house denying he was there, this deponent insisted he was, declared he would not go till he had seen him; and began searching the house: that Mr. Mayor then appearing, he demanded his assistance, to suppress a riotous mob; that when the mayor came in sight of them, he beckoned to Butler, who immediately came down from the place where he stood: that the mayor then went with this deponent, and looked on many of the people covered with dirt and blood: that some of them still remained in the house, fearing their lives, till James Chatterton and John Reily, esquires, sheriffs of Cork, and Hugh Millard, junr. Esq. alderman, turned them out to the mob, and nailed up the doors.

2. Elizabeth Holleran, of Cork, deposes,

That on May 3, as she was going down Castle-street, she saw Nicholas Butler on a table, with ballads in one hand and a bible in the other: that she expressed some concern thereat; on which sheriff Reily ordered his bailiff

to carry her to Bridewell; that afterward the bailiff came and said, "His master ordered she should be carried to gaol:" and that she continued in gaol from May 3, about eight in the evening, till between ten and twelve on May 5.

3. John Stockdale, of Cork, tallow-chandler, deposes,

That on May 5, while he and others were assembled to hear the word of God, Nicholas Butler came down to the house where they were with a very numerous mob: that when this deponent came out, they threw all manner of dirt and abundance of stones at him; that they then beat, bruised and cut him in several places: that seeing his wife on the ground and the mob abusing her still, he called out and besought them not to kill his wife: that on this one of them struck him with a large stick, as did also many others, so that he was hurt in several parts, and his face in a gore of blood.

4. Daniel Sullivan, of Cork, baker, deposes,

That every day but one from the 6th to the 16th of May, Nicholas Butler assembled a riotous mob, before this deponent's house; that they abused all who came into the shop, to the great damage of this deponent's business: that on or about the 15th Butler swore he would bring a mob the next day and pull down his house: that accordingly on the 16th he did bring a large mob, and beat or abused all that came to the house: that the mayor walked by while the mob was so employed, but did not hinder them; that afterwards they broke his windows, threw dirt and stones into his shop, and spoiled a great quantity of his goods.

Daniel Sullivan is ready to depose farther, that from the 16th of May to the 28th, the mob gathered every day before his house: that on Sunday the 28th, Butler swore, 'They would come the next day and pull down the house of that heretic dog:' and called aloud to the mob, 'Let the heretic dogs indict you; I will bring you all off without a farthing cost.'

That, accordingly, on May 29, Butler came with a greater mob than before: that he went to the mayor and

begged him to come, which he, for some time, refused to do; but, after much importunity, rose up, and walked with him down the street; that when they were in the midst of the mob, the mayor said aloud, 'It is your own fault, for entertaining these preachers; if you will turn them out of your house, I will engage there shall be no more harm done; but if you will not turn them out, you must take what you will get:' that upon this the mob set up an huzza, and threw stones faster than before: that he said, 'This is fine usage under a protestant government; if I had a priest saying mass in every room of it, my house would not be touched;' that the mayor replied, 'The priests are tolerated; but you are not; you talk too much; go in, and shut up your doors:' that seeing no remedy, he did so, and the mob continued breaking the windows and throwing stones in till near twelve at night.

That on May 31, the said Sullivan and two more, went and informed the mayor of what the mob was then doing: that it was not without great importunity, they brought him as far as the exchange: that he would go no farther, nor send any help, though some that were much bruised and wounded came by: that some hours after, when the mob had finished their work, he sent a party of soldiers to guard the walls.

5. John Stockdale deposes farther, that on May 31, he, with others, was quietly hearing the word of God, when Butler and his mob came down to the house: that as they came out, the mob threw showers of dirt and stones; that many were hurt, many beat, bruised, and cut, among whom was this deponent, who was so bruised and cut, that the effusion of blood from his head could not be stopped for a considerable time.

6. John M'Nerny, of Cork, deposes,

That on the 31st of May last, as this deponent, with others, was hearing a sermon, Butler came down with a large mob: that the stones and dirt coming in fast, obliged the congregation to shut the doors, and lock themselves in: that the mob broke open the door, on which this depo-

nent endeavoured to escape through a window: that not being able to do it, he returned into the house where he saw the mob tear up the pews, benches, and floor, part of which they afterwards burned in the open street, and carried away part for their own use.

7. Daniel Sullivan is ready to depose farther,

That Butler with a large mob went about from street to street, and from house to house, abusing, threatening, and beating whomsoever he pleased, from June 1st to the 16th, when they assaulted, bruised, and cut Ann Jenkins; and from the 16th to the 30th, when a woman whom they had beaten, miscarried, and narrowly escaped with life.

Some of the particulars were as follows.

Thomas Burnet, of Cork, nailor, deposes,

That on or about the 12th of June, as this deponent was at work in his master's shop, Nicholas Butler came with a great mob to the door, and seeing this deponent, told him, he was an heretic dog, and his soul was burning in hell: that this deponent asking, 'Why do you use me thus?' Butler took up a stone and struck him so violently on the side, that he was thereby rendered incapable of working for upwards of a week: that he hit this deponent's wife with another stone, without any kind of provocation, which so hurt her, that she was obliged to take to her bed, and has not been right well since.

Ann Cooshea, of Cork, deposes,

That on or about the 12th of June, as she was standing at her father's door, Nicholas Butler, with a riotous mob, began to abuse this deponent and her family, calling them heretic bitches, saying, they were damned and all their souls were in hell; that then, without any provocation, he took up a great stone, and threw it at this deponent, which struck her on the head with such force, that it deprived her of her senses for some time.

Ann Wright, of Cork, deposes,

That on or about the 12th of June, as this deponent was in her own house, Butler and his mob came before her door, calling her and her family heretic bitches, and

swearing, 'He would make her house hotter than hell-fire;' that he threw dirt and stones at them, hit her in the face, dashed all the goods about, which she had in her window, and she really believes, would have dashed out her brains, had she not quitted her shop, and fled for her life.

8. Margaret Griffin, of Cork, deposes,

That on the 24th of June, as this deponent was about her business, Butler and his mob came up, took hold on her, tore her clothes, struck her several times, and cut her mouth: that after she broke from him, he and his mob pursued her to her house, and would have broken in, had not some neighbours interposed: that he had beat and abused her several times before, and one of those times to such a degree, that she was all in a gore of blood, and continued spitting blood, for several days after.

Jacob Connor, clothier, of Cork, deposes,

That on the 24th of June, as he was employed in his lawful business, Butler and his mob came up, and without any manner of provocation fell upon him: that they beat him till they caused such an effusion of blood, as could not be stopped for a considerable time; and that he verily believes, had not a gentleman interposed, they would have killed him on the spot.

9. Ann Hughes, of Cork, deposes,

That on the 29th of June, she asked Nicholas Butler, why he broke open her house on the 21st? That hereon he called her many abusive names, (being attended with his usual mob) dragged her up and down, tore her clothes in pieces, and with his sword stabbed and cut her in both her arms.

Daniel Filts, blacksmith, of Cork, deposes,

That on the 29th of June, Butler and a riotous mob came before his door, called him many abusive names, drew his hanger and threatened to stab him: that he and his mob the next day assaulted the house of this deponent with drawn swords: and that he is persuaded, had not one who came by, prevented, they would have taken away his life.

10. Mary Fuller of Cork, deposes, that on the 30th of June, Butler, at the head of his mob, came between nine and ten at night to the deponent's shop, with a naked sword in his hand: that he swore, he would cleave the deponent's scull, and immediately made a full stroke at her head; whereupon she was obliged to flee for her life, leaving her shop and goods to the mob, many of which they hacked and hewed with their swords, to her no small loss and damage.

Henry Dunkle, joiner, of Cork, deposes,

That on the 30th of June, as he was standing at the widow Fuller's shop-window, he saw Butler, accompanied with a large mob, who stopped before her shop: that after he had grossly abused her, he made a full stroke with his hanger at her head; which must have cleft her in two, had not this deponent received the guard of the hanger on his shoulder: that presently after, the said Butler seized upon this deponent: that he seized him by the collar with one hand, and with the other held the hanger over his head, calling him all manner of names, and tearing his shirt and clothes; and that had it not been for the timely assistance of some neighbours, he verily believes he should have been torn in pieces.

Margaret Trimnell, of Cork, deposes,

That on the 30th of June, John Austin and Nicholas Butler, with a numerous mob, came to her shop: that after calling her many names, Austin struck her with his club on the right arm, so that it has been black ever since from the shoulder to the elbow: that Butler came next, and with a great stick struck her a violent blow across the back: that many of them then drew their swords, which they carried under their coats, and cut and hacked her goods, part of which they threw out into the street, while others of them threw dirt and stones into the shop, to the considerable damage of her goods and loss of this deponent.

11. It was not for those who had any regard either to their persons or goods, to oppose Mr. Butler after this. So the poor people patiently suffered whatever he and his

mob were pleased to inflict upon them, till the assizes drew on, at which they doubted not to find a sufficient, though late relief.

Accordingly, twenty eight depositions were taken, (from the foul copies of some of which the preceding account is mostly transcribed,) and laid before the Grand Jury, August 19. But they did not find any one of these bills. Instead of this, they made that memorable presentment, which is worthy to be preserved in the annals of Ireland, to all succeeding generations.

"We find and present Charles Wesley, to be a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of his majesty's peace, and we pray he may be transported."

We find and present James Williams, &c.

We find and present Robert Swindle, &c.

We find and present Jonathan Reeves, &c.

We find and present James Wheatley, &c.

We find and present John Larwood, &c.

We find and present Joseph M'Auliff, &c.

We find and present Charles Skelton, &c.

We find and present William Tooker, &c.

We find and present Daniel Sullivan, &c.

12. Mr. Butler and his mob were now in higher spirits than ever. They scoured the streets day and night; frequently hollowing as they went along, "Five pounds for a * Swaddler's head:" their chief declaring to them all, "He had full liberty now, to do whatever he would, even to murder, if he pleased, as Mr. Swain of North Abbey, and others, are ready to testify."

13. The sessions held at Cork, on the 5th of October following, produced another memorable presentment.

"We find and present John Horton, to be a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of his majesty's peace; and we pray, that he may be transported."

* A name first given to Mr. Cennick, from his first preaching on those words, "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

But complaint being made of this above, as wholly illegal, it vanished into air.

14. Some time after, Mr. Butler removed to Dublin, and began to sing his ballads there. But having little success, he returned to Cork, and in January began to scour the streets again, pursuing all of *this way*, with a large mob at his heels, armed with swords, staves, and pistols. Complaint was made of this, to William Holmes, Esq., the present mayor of Cork. But there was no removal of the thing complained of: the riots were not suppressed. Nay, they not only continued, but increased.

15. From the beginning of February to the end, his majesty's peace was preserved just as before: of which it may be proper to subjoin two or three instances, for the information of all thinking men.

William Jewell, clothier, of Shandon Church-lane, deposes,

That Nicholas Butler, with a riotous mob, several times assaulted this deponent's house: that particularly on the 23d of February, he came thither with a large mob, armed with clubs and other weapons: that several of the rioters entered the house, and swore, the first who resisted, they would blow their brains out: that the deponent's wife, endeavouring to stop them, was assaulted and beaten by the said Butler; who then ordered his men, to break the deponent's windows, which they did with stones of a considerable weight.

Mary Philips, of St. Peter's, Church-lane, deposes,

That on the 26th of February, about seven in the evening, Nicholas Butler came to her house with a large mob, and asked where her husband was. That as soon as she appeared, he first abused her in the grossest terms, and then struck her on the head, so that it stunned her; and she verily believes, had not some within thrust and fastened the door, she should have been murdered on the spot.

It may suffice for the present to add one instance more.

Elizabeth Gardelet, wife of Joseph Gardelet, corporal,

in Col. Pawlet's regiment, Capt. Charlton's company, deposes,

That on February the 28th, as she was going out of her lodgings, she was met by Butler and his mob: that Butler, without any manner of provocation, immediately fell upon her, striking her with both his fists on the side of the head, which knocked her head against the wall: that she endeavoured to escape from him, but he pursued her, and struck her several times in the face; that she ran into the school-yard for shelter, but he followed, and caught hold of her, saying, "You whore, you stand on consecrated ground," and threw her with such a force across the lane, that she was driven against the opposite wall: that when she had recovered herself a little, she made the best of her way to her lodging; but Butler still pursued, and overtook her as she was going up the stairs: that he struck her with his fist on the stomach, which stroke knocked her down backwards; that falling with the small of her back against the edge of one of the stairs, she was not able to rise again; that her pains immediately came upon her, and about two in the morning she miscarried.

16. These, with several more depositions to the same effect, were, in April, laid before the Grand Jury. Yet they did not find any of these bills! But they found one against Daniel Sullivan, the younger, (no preacher, but a hearer of the people called Methodists) who, when Butler and his mob were discharging a shower of stones upon him, fired a pistol, without any ball, over their heads. If any man has written this story to England in a quite different manner, and fixed it on a young Methodist preacher, let him be ashamed in the presence of God and man—unless shame and he have shook hands and parted.

17. Several of the persons presented as vagabonds in autumn, appeared at the Lent assizes. But none appearing against them, they were discharged, with honour to themselves and shame to their persecutors; who by bringing the matter to a judicial determination, plainly shewed, there is law even for Methodists; and gave his majesty's

judge a full occasion to declare the utter illegality of all riots, and the inexcusableness of tolerating (much more causing) them on any pretence whatsoever.

18. It was now generally believed there would be no more riots in Cork: although I cannot say that was my opinion. On May the 19th, I accepted the repeated invitation of Mr. Alderman Pembrock, and came to his house. Understanding the place where the preaching usually was, would by no means contain those who desired to hear me, at eight in the morning I went to Hammond's Marsh, the congregation was large and deeply attentive. A few of the rabble gathered at a distance; but by little and little they drew near, and mixed with the congregation. So that I have seldom seen a more quiet and orderly assembly at any church in England or Ireland.

19. In the afternoon a report being spread abroad, that the mayor designed to hinder my preaching on the Marsh; I desired Mr. Skelton and Jones to wait upon him, and inquire concerning it. Mr. Skelton asked, if my preaching there would be offensive to him: adding, "If it would, Mr. W. would not do it." He replied warmly, "Sir, I will have no mobbing." Mr. S. said, "Sir, there was none this morning." He answered, "There was. Are there not churches and meetings enough? I will have no more mobs and riots." Mr. S. replied, "Sir, neither Mr. W. nor they that heard him made either mobs or riots." He answered plainly, "I *will have* no more preaching. And if Mr. W. attempts to preach, I am prepared for him."

I did not conceive till now, that there was any real meaning in what a gentleman said some time since; who being told, "Sir, king George tolerates Methodists," replied, "Sir, you shall find, the mayor is king of Cork."

20. I began preaching in our own house soon after five. Mr. Mayor mean time was walking in the 'change, where he gave orders to the drummers of the town, and to his sergeants,—doubtless to go down and keep the peace. They came down with an innumerable mob to the house. They continued drumming, and I continued preaching till

I had finished my discourse. When I came out, the mob immediately closed me in. I desired one of the sergeants to protect me from the mob; but he replied, "Sir, I have no orders to do that." When I came into the street, they threw whatever came to hand. I walked on straight thro' the midst of them, looking every man in the face, and they opened to the right and left till I came near Dant's-bridge. A large party had taken possession of this, one of whom was bawling out, "Now, heigh for the Romans!" When I came up, these likewise shrunk back, and I walked through them into Mr. Jenkins's house.

But many of the congregation were more roughly handled; particularly Mr. Jones, who was covered with dirt, and escaped with his life almost by a miracle. The main body of the mob then went to the house, brought out all the seats and benches, tore up the floor, the door, the frames of the windows, and whatever of wood-work remained, part of which they carried off for their own use, and the rest they burnt in the open street.

21. Monday the 21st, I rode on to Bandon. From three in the afternoon till after seven, the mob of Cork marched in grand procession, and then burnt me in effigy near Dant's-bridge.

Tuesday 22. The mob and drummers were moving again between three and four in the morning. The same evening the mob came down to Hammond's Marsh, but stood at a distance from Mr. Stockdale's house, till the drums beat, and the mayor's serjeant's beckoned to them, on which they drew up and began to attack. The mayor being sent for, came with a party of soldiers. Mr. Stockdale earnestly desired, that he would disperse the mob, or at least leave the soldiers there to protect them from the rioters. But he took them all away with him; on which the mob went on, and broke all the glass and most of the window-frames in pieces.

22. Wednesday 23. The mob was still patrolling the streets, abusing all that were called Methodists. And

threatening to murder them, and pull down their houses if they did not leave *this way*.

Thursday 24. They again assaulted Mr. Stockdale's house, broke down the boards he had nailed up against the windows, destroyed what little remained of the window-frames and shutters, and damaged a considerable part of his goods.

Friday 25, and again on Saturday 26, one Roger O'Ferrall fixed up an advertisement at the public exchange, (as he had also done for several days before,) "That he was ready to head any mob, in order to pull down any house that should dare to harbour a Swaddler."

23. Sunday 27, I wrote the following letter to the mayor:

MR. MAYOR,

AN hour ago I received "a letter to Mr. Butler, just reprinted at Cork. The publishers assert, "It was brought down from Dublin to be distributed among the society. But Mr. Wesley called in as many as he could." Both these assertions are absolutely false. I read some lines of that letter when I was in Dublin, but never read it over before this morning. Who the author of it is I know not. But this I know; I never called in one; neither concerned myself about it; much less brought any down to distribute among the society.

Yet I cannot but return my hearty thanks to the gentlemen who have distributed them through the town. I believe it will do more good than they are sensible of. For though I dislike its condemning the magistrates and clergy in general, (several of whom were not concerned in the late proceedings,) yet I think the reasoning is strong and clear. And that the facts referred to therein, are not at all misrepresented, will sufficiently appear in due time.

I fear God and honour the king. I earnestly desire to be at peace with all men. I have not willingly given any offence, either to the magistrates, the clergy, or any of the inhabitants of the city of Cork, neither do I desire any thing of them, but to be treated (I will not say, as a cler-

gyman, a gentleman, or a Christian) but with such justice and humanity as are due, to a Jew, a Turk, or a Pagan.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. WESLEY.

II. 1. Your performance is dated May 28th, the most material parts of which I am now to consider.

It contains, first, a charge against the Methodist preachers; secondly, a defence of the corporation and clergy of Cork.

With regard to your charge against those preachers, may I take the liberty to inquire, why you drop six out of the eleven that have been at Cork, viz. Mr. Swindells, Wheatly, Larwood, Skelton, Tucker, and Haughton: can you glean up no story concerning these? Or is it out of mere compassion that you spare them?

2. But before I proceed, I must beg leave to ask, who is this *Evidence* against the other five? Why, one that neither dares shew his face, nor tell his name, or the place of his abode: one that is ashamed (and truly not without cause) of the dirty work he is employed in: so that we could not even conjecture who he was but that his speech bewrayeth him. How much credit is due to such an *evidence*, let any man of reason judge.

3. This worthy witness falls foul upon Mr. Cownley, (p. 13,) and miserably murders a tale he has got by the end. Sir, Mr. M. is nothing obliged to you, for bringing the character of his niece into question. He is perfectly satisfied that Mr. C. acted in that whole affair, with the strictest regard both to honour and conscience.

You next aver, that "Mr. Reeves asked a young woman, whether she had a mind to go to hell with her father!" (p. 16.) It is possible. I will neither deny nor affirm it without some better proof. But suppose he did; unless I know the circumstances of the case I could not say, whether he spoke right or wrong.

4. But what is this to the "Monstrous, shocking, amazing blasphemy, spoken by Mr. Charles Wesley? Who

one day," you say, "preaching on Hammond's Marsh, called out, 'Has any of you got the Spirit?' And when none answered, said, 'I am sure some of you have got it: for I feel virtue go out of me,'" (p. 18.) Sir, do you expect any one to believe this story? I doubt it will not pass even at Cork,—unless with your wise friend, who said, "Methodists? Ay, they are the people who place all their religion, in wearing long whiskers."

5. In the same page you attack Mr. Williams, for applying those words, 'I, thy Maker, am thy husband.' Sir, by the same rule that you conclude "these expressions could only flow from a mind full of lascivious ideas," you may conclude the 45th Psalm, to be only a wanton sonnet, and the Canticles a counterpart to Rochester's poems.

But you say, he likewise "made use of unwarrantable expressions, particularly with regard to faith and good works. And the next day denied that he had used them," (p. 10, 11.) Sir, your word is not proof of this. Be pleased to produce proper vouchers of the facts: and I will then give a farther answer.

Likewise, as to his "indecent and irreverent behaviour at church, turning all the preacher said into ridicule, so that numbers asked in your hearing, why the church-wardens did not put the profane, wicked scoundrels in the stocks!" my present answer is, I doubt the facts. Will your "men of undoubted character" be so good as to attest them?

6. Of all these, Mr. Williams, Cownley, Reeves, Haughton, Larwood, Skelton, Swindells, Tucker, and Wheatly, you pronounce in the lump, that they are "a parcel of vagabond, illiterate babblers." Of whom "every body that has the least share of reason must know," that though "they amuse the populace with nonsense, ribaldry, and blasphemy, they are not capable of writing orthography or good sense," (p. 3, 4.) Sir, that is not an adjudged case. Some who have a little share of reason, think they are capable both of speaking and writing good sense. But if they are not, if they cannot write or read, they can save souls from death: they can, by the grace of God, bring

sinners 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'

7. But they "made a woman plunder her poor, old husband, and another absent herself from her husband and children," (p. 24, 25.) Pray, what are their names? Where do they live? And how may one come to the speech of them? I have heard so many plausible tales of this kind, which on examination vanished away, that I cannot believe one word of this, till I have more proof than your bare assertion.

8. So far I have been pleading for others. But I am now called to answer for myself. For "Theophilus and John Wesley," say you, "seem to me the same individual person," (p. 4.) They may seem so to you: but not to any who knows either my style or manner of writing. Besides, if it had been mine, it would have borne my name. For I do not love fighting in the dark.

But were not "a great number" of those books "brought from Dublin, to be dispersed throughout the city?" Not by me. Not by my order; nor, to my knowledge. However I thank you again, for dispersing them.

9. But "while charity stands in the front of Christian graces, the author of such a book can have none of that grace. For you must allow the vulgar to think," (p. 26.) *Mal-a-propo* enough, a lively saying. But for any use it is of, it may stand either in the front or rear of the sentence. The argument itself is something new. A man knocks me down. I cry, 'Help! Help, or I shall be murdered.' He replies, "While charity stands in the front of Christian graces, the author of such a cry can have none of that grace."

So now you have shewn to all the world, "the uncharitable and consequently unchristian spirit of Methodism." What! Because the Methodists cry out for help, before you have quite beat out their brains? What grimace is this? His majesty's quiet, loyal, Protestant subjects are abused, insulted, outraged, beaten, covered with dirt, rolled in the mire, bruised, wounded with swords and hangers,

murdered, have their houses broke open, their goods destroyed, or carried away before their face: and all this in open day, in the face of the sun, yet without any remedy! And those who treat them thus are *charitable* men! Brimfull of a *Christian* spirit! But if they who are so treated, appeal to the common sense and reason of mankind, you gravely cry, "See the uncharitable, the unchristian spirit of Methodism!"

10. You proceed. "But pray, what are those facts, which you say are not misrepresented? Do you mean, that Butler was hired and paid by the corporation and clergy? Or that this remarkable loyal city, is disaffected to the present government? And that a papist was supported, nay, hired by the chief magistrates, to walk the streets, threatening bloodshed and murder? Declare openly, whether these are the facts." Sir, I understand you well. But for the present, I beg to be excused. There is a time and a place for all things.

11. I rejoice to hear the city of Cork is so "remarkably loyal!" So entirely "well-affected to the present government." I presume you mean this chiefly of "The Friendly Society," (in whom the power of the city is now lodged,) erected some time since, in opposition to that body of Jacobites, commonly called, "The Hanover Club." I suppose that zealous Anti-methodist, who some days ago, stabbed the Methodist preacher in the street, and then cried out, 'Damn king George, and all his armies!' did this as a specimen of his *eminent loyalty*.

It cannot be denied, that this loyal subject of king George (Simon Rawlins, by name) was upon oath made of those words, committed to gaol, on May the 31st. And it was not till days after, that he walked in procession through the town, with drums beating, and colours flying, and declared at the head of his mob, 'He would never rest, till he had driven all these *false prophets* out of Cork.' How sincere they were in their good wishes to king George and his armies, they gave a clear proof the tenth of this instant, June: when, as ten or twelve soldiers were walking along,

in a very quiet and inoffensive manner, the mob fell upon them, swore they would have their lives, knocked them down, and beat them to such a degree, that on June the 12th, one of them died of his wounds, and another was not then expected to live many hours.

12. But you have more proofs of my uncharitableness, that is, supposing I am the author of that pamphlet. For you read there, 'Riches, ease, and honour, are what the clergy set their hearts upon. But the souls for whom Christ died, they leave to the tender mercies of hell.' Sir, Can you deny it? Is it not true? Literally true, concerning some of the clergy? You ask, "But ought we to condemn all, for the faults of a few?" (p. 20.) I answer, No; no more than I will condemn all, in the affair of Cork, for the faults of a few. It is you that do this. And if it were as you say, if they were all *concerned* in the late proceedings, then it would be no uncharitableness to say, 'They were in a miserable state indeed.' Then they would doubtless be 'kicking against the pricks, contending with heaven, fighting against God.'

13. I come now to the general charge against me, independent on the letter to Mr. Butler. And, 1st, You charge me with "a frontless assurance, and a well dissembled hypocrisy," (p. 22.) Sir, I thank you. This is as kind, as if you were to call me (with Mr. Williams) "a profane, wicked scoundrel." I am not careful to answer in this matter: shortly we shall both stand at an higher bar.

14. You charge me, secondly, with being an "hare-brained enthusiast," (p. 7.) Sir, I am your most obedient servant. But you will prove me an enthusiast. "For," you say, (those are your words,) "you are sent of God to inform mankind, of *some* other revelation of his will, *than* what has been left by Christ and his apostles," (p. 28.) Not so. I never said any such thing. When I do this, then call for miracles. But at present your demand is quite unreasonable. There is no room for it at all. What I advance, I prove by the words of Christ, or his apostles. If not, let it fall to the ground.

†

15. You charge me, thirdly, with being employed in "promoting the cause of arbitrary popish power," (p. 7.) Sir, I plead not guilty. Produce your witnesses. Prove this, and I will allow all the rest.

You charge me, fourthly, with holding "Midnight Assemblies," (p. 24.) Sir, did you never see the word *Vigil* in your common prayer book? Do you know what it means? If not, permit me to tell you, that it was customary with the ancient Christians, to spend whole nights in prayer: and that these nights were termed *Vigiliæ*, or *Vigils*. Therefore for spending a part of some nights in this manner, in public and solemn prayer, we have not only the authority of our own national church, but of the universal church, in the earliest ages.

16. You charge me, fifthly, with "being the cause of all that Butler has done," (p. 17.) True: just as Latimer and Ridley (if I may dare to name myself with those venerable men) were the cause of all that bishop Bonner did. In this sense, the charge is true. It has pleased God, (unto him be all the glory,) even by my preaching or writings, to convince some of the old Christian scriptural doctrine, which till then they knew not. And while they declared this to others, you shewed them the same love, as Edmund of London did to their forefathers. Only the expressions of your love, were not quite the same; because (blessed be God) you had not the same power.

17. You affirm, sixthly, that I "rob and plunder the poor, so as to leave them neither bread to eat, nor raiment to put on." (p. 8.) An heavy charge, but without all colour of truth. Yea, just the reverse is true. Abundance of those in Cork, Bandon, Limerick, Dublin, as well as in all parts of England, who a few years ago, either through sloth or profaneness, had not bread to eat, or raiment to put on, have now by means of the preachers called Methodists, a sufficiency of both. Since by hearing these, they have learned to fear God, they have learned also to work with their hands, as well as to cut off every needless

expense, to be good stewards of the mammon of unrighteousness.

18. You assert, seventhly, that I am "myself as fond of riches, as the most worldly clergyman," (p. 21.) "Two thousand pence a week! A fine yearly revenue from assurance and salvation-tickets?" (p. 8.) I answer, 1. What do you mean by *assurance and salvation-tickets?* Is not the very expression a mixture of nonsense and blasphemy? 2. How strangely did you under-rate my revenue, when you wrote in the person of George Fisher? You then allowed me only a hundred pounds a year! What is this to two thousand pence a week! 3. "There is not a clergyman," you say, "who would not willingly exchange his livings, for your yearly penny contributions," (p. 21.) And no wonder. For according to a late computation, they amount to no less every year, than eight hundred, eighty-six thousand pounds, beside some odd shillings and pence: in comparison of which the revenue of his grace of Armagh, or of Canterbury, is a very trifle. And yet, Sir, so great is my regard for you and my gratitude for your late services, that if you will only resign your curacy of Christ's Church, I will make over to you my whole revenue in Ireland.

19. But "the honour I gain," you think "is even greater than profit." Alas, Sir, I have not generosity enough to relish it, I was always of Juvenal's mind,

Gloria quantalibet, quid erit si gloria tantum?

And especially, while there are so many dead drawbacks, so many dead flies in the pot of ointment. Sheer honour might taste tolerably well. But there is gall with the honey, and less of the honey than the gall. Pray, Sir, what think *you?* Have I more honour or dishonour? Do more people praise or blame me? How is it in Cork? Nay, (to go no farther,) among your own little circle of acquaintance? Where you hear one commend, do not ten cry out, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth!'

Above all, I do not love honour with dry blows. I do not find it will cure broken bones. But perhaps you may think, I glory in these. O how should I have gloried then,

if your good friends at Dant's-bridge had burnt my person, instead of my effigy? We are here to set religion out of the question. You do not suppose, I have any thing to do with that. Why if so, I should rather leave *you* the honour, and myself sleep in a whole skin. On that supposition I quite agree with the epigrammatist,

Virgilii in tumulo, divini præmia vatis,
Explicat en viridem laurea læta comam.
Quid te defunctum juvat hæc? Felicior olim
Sub patulæ fagi tegmine vivus eras.

20. Your last charge is, That, "I profess myself to be a member of the established church, and yet act contrary to the commands of my spiritual governors, and stab the church to the very vitals," (p. 27.) I answer, 1. What *spiritual governor* has commanded me not to preach, in any part of his majesty's dominions? I know not one, to this very day, either in England or Ireland. 2. What is it, to stab the church to the very vitals? Why to deny her fundamental doctrines. And do I, or you, do this? Let any who has read her liturgy, articles, and homilies, judge, which of us two denies, 'That we are justified by faith alone?' That every believer has 'the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit?' That all who are strong in faith, do 'perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name!' He that denies this is "the treacherous son, who stabs this affectionate and tender mother."

If you deny it, you have already disowned the church. But as for me I neither can nor will; though I know you sincerely desire I should.

Hoc Ithacus velit et magno mercentur Achivi.

But I choose to stay in the church, were it only to reprove those who *betray* her *with a kiss*.

21. I come now to your defence of the corporation and clergy. But sure such a defence was never seen before. For whereas I had said, I 'dislike the condemning the magistrates or clergy in general, because several of them' (so I charitably supposed) 'were not concerned in the late proceedings:' you answer, "Pray, by all means, point them

out, that they may be distinguished by some mark of honour above their brethren" (p. 29, 30.) What do you mean? If you mean any thing at all, it must be that they were "all concerned in the late proceedings." Sir, if they were (of which I own, you are a better judge than I,) was it needful to declare this to all the world? Especially, in so plain terms as these? Did not your zeal here a little outrun your wisdom?

22. But "the magistrate," you say, "was only endeavouring to secure the peace of the city," (p. 6.) A very extraordinary way of securing peace! Truly, Sir, I cannot yet believe, not even on your word, that "all the magistrates except one were concerned, in this method of securing peace," (p. 29, 30.) Much less can I believe, that "all the clergy were concerned in thus endeavouring to bring back their flock led astray by these hirelings," (an unlucky word) "into the right fold."

23. Of the clergy you add, "What need have they to rage and foam at your preaching? Suppose you could delude the greater part of their flocks, this could not affect their temporal interest," (p. 7.) We do not desire it should. We only desire, to *delude* all mankind, (if you will term it a delusion,) into a serious concern for their eternal interest, for a treasure which none can take away.

Having both now stated the facts to which you referred, and considered the most material parts of your performance, I have only to subjoin a few obvious reflections, naturally arising from a view of those uncommon occurrences; partly with regard to the motives of those who were active therein; partly to their manner of acting. With regard to the former, every reasonable man, will naturally inquire, on what motives could any, either of the clergy or the corporation, ever think of opposing that preaching, by which so many notoriously vicious men have been brought to an eminently virtuous life and conversation?

You supply us yourself with one unexceptionable answer, "Those of the clergy with whom I have conversed, freely own, they have not learning sufficient to comprehend

your scheme of religion," (p. 30.) If they have not, I am sorry for them. My scheme of religion is this. Love is the fulfilling of the law. From the true love of God and man, directly flows every Christian grace, every holy and happy temper: and from these spring uniform holiness of conversation, in conformity to those great rules, whether ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God: and, whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them. But this you say, "those of the clergy with whom you converse, have not learning enough to comprehend." Consequently *their* ignorance, or not understanding our doctrine, is the reason why they oppose us!

2. I learn from you, that ignorance of another kind, is a second reason why some of the clergy oppose us. They (like you) think us "enemies to the church." The natural consequence is, that in proportion to their zeal for the church, their zeal against us will be.

3. The zeal which many of them have for orthodoxy, or right opinions, is a third reason for opposing us. For they judge us heterodox in several points, maintainers of strange opinions. And the truth is, the old doctrines of the reformation are now quite new in the world. Hence those who revive them, cannot fail to be opposed by those of the clergy who know them not.

4. Fourthly, Their honour is touched, when others pretend to know what they do not know themselves; especially when unlearned and (otherwise) ignorant men, lay claim to any such knowledge. "What is the tendency of all this," (as you observe on another head,) "but to work in men's minds a mean opinion of the clergy?" But who can tamely suffer this! None but those who have the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

5. Again, will not some say, 'Master, by thus *acting*, thou reproachest us.' By preaching sixteen or eighteen times a week? And by a thousand other things of the same kind? Is not this, in effect, reproaching us, as if we were lazy and indolent? As if we had not a sufficient love to the souls of those committed to our charge?

6. May there not likewise be some (perhaps unobserved) envy, in the breast even of men that fear God? How much more in them that do not! When they hear of the great success of these preachers, of the esteem and honour that are paid to them by the people, and the immense riches which they acquire? What wonder if this occasions a zeal which is not the flame of fervent love?

7. Add to this, a desire in some of the inferior clergy of pleasing their superiors; supposing these (which is no impossible supposition) are first influenced by any of these motives. Add the imprudence of some that hear those preachers, and (perhaps) needlessly provoke their parochial ministers. And when all these things are considered, none need be at a loss for the motives on which many of the clergy have opposed us.

8. But from what motives can any of the corporation oppose us? I must beg the gentlemen of this body to observe, that I dare by no means lump them all together, as their awkward defender has done. But this I may say without offence, there are some even among *you* who are not so remarkably loyal as others, not so eminently well-affected to the present government. Now these cannot but observe, (gentlemen, I speak plain, for I am to deliver my own soul in the sight of God,) that wherever we preach, many who were his enemies before, became zealous friends to his majesty. The instances glare both in England and Ireland. Those, therefore, who are not so zealously his friends, have a strong motive to oppose us; though it cannot be expected they should own this to be the motive on which they act.

9. Others may have been prejudiced by the artful misrepresentations these have made, or by those they have frequently heard from the pulpit. Indeed this has been the grand fountain of popular prejudice. In every part both of England and Ireland, the clergy, where they were inclined so to do, have most effectually stirred up the people.

10. There has been another reason assigned for the opposition that was made to me in particular at Cork, viz. 'That the mayor was offended at my preaching on Ham-

mond's Marsh, and, therefore, resolved I should not preach at all: whereas, if I had not preached abroad, he would have given me leave to preach in the house." Would Mr. Mayor have given me leave to preach in my own house? I return him most humble thanks. But should he be so courteous as to make me the offer even now, I should not accept it on any such terms. Greater men than he have endeavoured to hinder me from calling sinners to repentance in that open and public manner. But hitherto it has been all lost labour. They have never yet been able to prevail. Nor ever will, till they can *conquer king George and his armies*. To *curse* them is not enough.

11. Lastly, Some (I hope but a few) do cordially believe, that 'private vices are public benefits.' I myself heard this in Cork, when I was there last. These consequently think us the destroyers of their city, by so lessening the number of their public benefactors, the gluttons, the drunkards, the dram-drinkers, the sabbath-breakers, the common-swearers, the cheats of every kind, and the followers of that ancient and *honourable* trade, adultery and fornication.

12. These are the undeniable motives to this opposition. I come now to the manner of it. When some gentlemen inquired of one of the bishops in England, 'My lord, what must we do to stop these new preachers?' He answered, 'If they preach contrary to Scripture, confute them by Scripture: if contrary to reason, confute them by reason. But beware you use no other weapons than these, either in opposing error, or defending the truth.'

Would to God this rule had been followed at Cork. But how little has it been thought of there! The opposition was begun with lies of all kinds, frequently delivered in the name of God. So that never was any thing so ill judged as for *you* to ask, "Does Christianity encourage its professors to make use of lies, invectives, or low, mean, and abusive scurrility, to carry on its interest?" No, Sir, it does not. I disclaim and abhor every weapon of this kind. But with these have the Methodist preachers been opposed, in Cork above any other place. In England, in all Ireland, have I

neither heard nor read any like those gross, palpable *lies*, those *low*, *Billingsgate invectives*, and that inexpressibly *mean abuse* and base *scurrility*, which the opposers of Methodism, so called, have continually made use of, and which has been the strength of their cause from the beginning.

13. If it be not so, let the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Cork, (for he too has openly entered the lists against the Methodists,) the Rev. Dr. Tisdale, or any other whom his lordship shall appoint, meet me on even ground, writing as a gentleman to a gentleman, a scholar to a scholar, a clergyman to a clergyman. Let him thus shew me wherein I have preached or written amiss, and I will stand reproved before all the world.

14. But let not his lordship, or any other, continue to put *persecution* in the place of reason; either *private persecution*, stirring up husbands to threaten or beat their wives, parents their children, masters their servants; gentlemen to ruin their tenants, labourers, or tradesmen, by turning them out of their farms or cottages, employing, or buying of them no more, because they worship God according to their own conscience: or open, barefaced, noon-day, *Corlo-persecution*, breaking open the houses of his majesty's protestant subjects, destroying their goods, spoiling or tearing the very clothes from their backs; striking, bruising, wounding, murdering them in the streets: dragging them through the mire, without any regard to age or sex; not sparing even those of tender years; no nor women, though great with child; but with more than Pagan or Mahometan barbarity, destroying infants that were yet unborn.

15. Ought these things so to be? Are they right before God or man? Are they to the honour of our nation? I appeal unto Cæsar; unto his gracious majesty king George, and to the governors under him both in England and Ireland. I appeal to all true, disinterested lovers of this their native country. Is this the way to make it a flourishing nation? Happy at home, amiable and honourable abroad? Men of Ireland judge! Nay, and is there not some weight

in that additional consideration, that this is not a concern of a private nature, rather is it not a common cause?

If the dams are once broken down, if you tamely give up the fundamental laws of your country, if these are openly violated in the case of your fellow-subjects, how soon may the case be your own. For what protection then have any of you left, for either your liberty or property? What security for either your goods or lives, if a riotous mob is to be both judge, jury, and executioner?

16. Protestants, what is become of that liberty of conscience for which your forefathers spent their blood? Is it not an empty shadow, a mere unmeaning name, if these things are suffered among you? Romans, such of you as are calm and candid men, do *you* approve of these proceedings? I cannot think you yourselves would use such methods of convincing us, if we think amiss. Christians of all denominations, can you reconcile this to our royal law, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?' O tell it not in Gath! Let it not be named among those who are enemies to the Christian cause! Lest that worthy name whereby we are called, be still more blasphemed among the Heathen!

A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. DR. CONYERS MIDDLETON,

OCCASIONED BY HIS LATE FREE INQUIRY.

January 4, 1748-9.

REV. SIR,

1. IN your late *Inquiry*, you endeavour to prove, first, That there were no miracles wrought in the primitive church; secondly, That all the primitive Fathers were fools or knaves, and most of them both one and the other. And it is easy to observe, the whole tenor of your argument tends to prove; thirdly, That no miracles were wrought by Christ or his apostles; and, fourthly, That those too were fools or knaves, or both.

2. I am not agreed with you on any of these heads. My reasons I shall lay before you, in as free a manner (though not in so smooth or laboured language) as you have laid yours before the world.

3. But I have neither inclination nor leisure to follow you step by step through three hundred and seventy-three quarto pages. I shall therefore set aside all I find in your work which does not touch the merits of the cause: and likewise contract the question itself to the three first cen-

turies. For I have no more to do with the writers or miracles of the fourth, than with those of the fourteenth century.

4. You will naturally ask, 'Why do you stop there? What reason can you give for this? If you allow miracles before the empire became Christian, why not afterwards too? I answer, because "After the empire became christian," (they are your own words,) "a general corruption both of faith and morals infected the Christian church: which by that revolution, as St. Jerome says, 'lost as much of its virtue, as it had gained of wealth and power,'" (p. 123.) And this very reason St. Chrysostom himself gave in the words you have afterwards cited; 'There are some who ask, Why are not miracles performed still? Why are there no persons who raise the dead, and cure diseases?' To which he replies, 'That it was owing to the want of faith, and virtue, and piety in those times.'

1. You begin your *preface* by observing, that "the inquiry was intended to have been published" some time ago; but upon reflection, you resolved to "give out first some sketch of what you were projecting:" (preface, p. 1) and accordingly, "published the introductory discourse" by itself, though "foreseeing it would encounter all the opposition, that prejudice, bigotry, and superstition, are ever prepared to give to all inquiries" (p. 2) of this nature. But it was your "comfort, that this would excite candid inquirers to weigh the merit and consequences of it," p. 3.

2. The consequences of it are tolerably plain, even to free the good people of England from all that "prejudice, bigotry, and superstition," vulgarly called Christianity. But it is not so plain, that "this is the sole expedient which can secure the Protestant religion against the efforts of Rome," (ibid.) It may be doubted, whether deism is the *sole expedient* to secure us against Popery. For some are of opinion, there are persons in the world who are neither Deists nor Papists.

3. You open the cause artfully enough, by a quotation from Mr. Locke, (p. 4.) But we are agreed to build our

faith on no man's authority. His reasons will be considered in their place.

"Those who have written against his and your opinion," you say, "have shewn great eagerness, but little knowledge of the question: urged by the hopes of honours, and prepared to fight for every establishment, that offers such pay to its defenders," (p. 5.) I have not read one of these: yet I would fain believe, that neither the hope of honour, nor the desire of pay, was the sole or indeed the main motive that urged either them or you to engage in writing.

But I grant, they are overseen, if they argue against you, by citing "the testimonies of the ancient Fathers:" (p. 6.) seeing they might easily perceive you pay no more regard to these than to the evangelists or apostles. Neither do I commend them if they "insinuate jealousies of consequences dangerous to Christianity." (ibid.) Why they should insinuate these, I cannot conceive: I need not insinuate, that the sun shines at noon-day. You have "opened too great a glare to the public," (p. 7,) to leave them any room for such insinuation. Though (to save appearances) you gravely declare still, "Were my argument allowed to be true, the credit of the gospel-miracles could not in any degree be shaken by it." p. 6.

4. So far is flourish. Now we come to the point. "The present question," you say, "depends on the joint credibility of the facts, and of the witnesses who attest them, especially on the former. For if the facts be incredible, no testimony can alter the nature of things." (p. 9.) All this is most true. You go on, "The credibility of facts lies open to the trial of our reason and senses. But the credibility of witnesses depends on a variety of principles wholly concealed from us. And though in many cases it may reasonably be presumed, yet in none can it be certainly known." (p. 10.) Sir, will you retract this or defend it? If you defend, and can prove, as well as assert it, then farewell the credit of all history, not only sacred but profane. If "the credibility of witnesses" (of all witnesses; for you make no distinction) depends, as you peremptorily

affirm, on a variety of principles "wholly concealed from us;" and consequently, though it may be presumed in many cases, yet can be certainly known in none: then it is plain, all the history of the Bible is utterly precarious and uncertain: then I may indeed "presume," but cannot "certainly know," that Jesus of Nazareth ever was born; much less that he healed the sick, and raised either Lazarus or himself from the dead. Now, Sir, go and declare again, how careful you are, for "the credit of the gospel-miracles!"

5. But for fear any (considering how "frank and open" your nature is, and how "warmly disposed to speak what you take to be true," (p. 7,) should fancy you meant what you said in this declaration, you take care to inform them soon after: "The whole which the wit of man can possibly discover, either of the ways or will of the Creator, must be acquired by attending seriously," (To what? To the Jewish or Christian revelation? No: but) "to that revelation which he hath made of himself from the beginning, in the beautiful fabric of this visible world." p. 22.

6. I believe your opponents will not hereafter urge you, either with "that passage from St. Mark," or any other from Scripture. At least I will not; unless I forget myself; as I observe you have done just now. For you said but now, "Before we proceed to examine testimonies for the decision of this dispute, our first care should be, to inform ourselves of the nature of those miraculous powers, which are the subject of it, as they are represented to us in the history of the gospel." (p. 10.) Very true; "This should be our first care." I was therefore all attention to hear your account of "the nature of those powers, as they are represented to us in the gospel." But, alas! You say not a word more about it; but slip away to those "zealous champions who have attempted" (bold men as they are) "to refute the introductory discourse."

Perhaps you will say, "Yes, I repeat that text from St. Mark." You do; yet not describing the nature of those powers; but only to open the way to "one of your

antagonists;" (p. 12) of whom you yourself affirm, that "not one of them seems to have spent a thought in considering those powers as they are set forth in the New Testament." (p. 11.) Consequently, the bare repeating that text does not prove you (any more than they) to have "spent one thought upon the subject."

7. From this antagonist you ramble away to another; (p. 13) after a long citation from whom, you subjoin, "It being agreed then, that in the original promise there is no intimation of any particular period to which their continuance was limited." (p. 14.) Sir, you have lost your way. We have as yet nothing to do with their "continuance. For till we have learned from those sacred records" (I use your own words) "what they were, and in what manner exerted by the apostles, we cannot form a proper judgment of those evidences which are brought either to confirm or confute their continuance in the church; and must consequently dispute at random, as chance or prejudice may prompt us, about things unknown to us." p. 15, 17.

Now, Sir, if this be true, (as without doubt it is,) then it necessarily follows, that seeing, from the beginning of your book to the end, you spend not one page to *inform* either yourself or your readers, concerning the nature of these miraculous powers, "as they are represented to us in the history of the gospel:" you "dispute" throughout the whole "at random, as chance or prejudice prompts you, about things unknown to you."

8. Your reply to "the adversaries of your scheme," (p. 11,) I may let alone for the present; and the rather, because the arguments used therein, will occur again and again. Only I would here take notice of one assertion, "that the miraculous powers conferred on the apostles themselves were imparted just at the moment of their exertion, and withdrawn again as soon as those particular occasions were served." (p. 23.) You should not have asserted this, be it true or false, without some stronger proof. "This, I say, is evident," (ibid.) is not a sufficient proof; nor, "A treatise is prepared on that subject." (p. 24.)

Neither is it proved by that comment of Grotius* on our Lord's promise, which literally translated runs thus: "To every believer there was then given some wonderful power, which was to exert itself, not indeed always, but when there was occasion."

9. But waving this; I grant "the single point in dispute is, Whether the testimony of the Fathers, be a sufficient ground to believe, that miraculous gifts subsisted at all, after the days of the apostles?" (p. 27.) But with this you interweave another question, Whether the Fathers were not all fools or knaves? In treating of which you strongly intimate; first, That such gifts did never subsist, and, secondly, That the apostles were equally wise and good, with the *wonder-workers* (your favourite term,) that followed them.

When therefore you add, "My opinion is this, that after our Lord's ascension, the extraordinary gifts he had promised were poured out on the apostles, and the other primary instruments of planting the gospel; in order to enable them to over-rule the inveterate prejudices both of the Jews and Gentiles, and to bear up against the discouraging shocks of popular rage and persecution." (p. 28.) I look upon all this to be mere grimace. You believe not one word of what you say. You cannot possibly, if you believe what you said before. For who can believe both sides of a contradiction?

10. However, I will suppose you do believe it, and will argue with you from your own words. But first let us have a few more of them. (p. 28.) "In process of time, as miraculous powers began to be less and less wanted, so they began gradually to decline, till they were finally withdrawn. (p. 29.) And this may probably be thought to have happened while some of the apostles were still living."

These were given, you say, to the first planters of the gospel, "in order to enable them to over-rule the inveterate

* Grotius in Mar. xvi. 17. Non omnibus omnia—ita tamen cuilibet credenti tunc data sit admirabilis facultas, quæ se, non semper quidem, sed data occasione explicaret.

prejudices both of Jews and Gentiles, and to bear up against the shocks of persecution." Thus far we are agreed. They were given for these ends. But if you allow this, you cannot suppose, consistently with yourself, that they were withdrawn till these ends were fully answered. So long, therefore, as those prejudices subsisted, and Christians were exposed to the shocks of persecution, you cannot deny but there was the same occasion for those powers to be continued, as there was for their being given at first. And this, you say, is "a postulatum, which all people will grant, that they continued as long as they were necessary to the church," (p. 11.)

11. Now did those prejudices cease, or was persecution at an end, while some of the Apostles were still living? You have yourself abundantly shewn they did not. You know, there was as sharp persecution in the third century, as there was in the first, while all the Apostles were living. And with regard to prejudices, you have industriously remarked, that "the principal writers of Rome, who make any mention of the Christians, about the time of Trajan, speak of them as a set of despicable, stubborn, and even wicked enthusiasts," (p. 193.) "That Suetonius calls them 'a race of men of a new and mischievous superstition:'" (p. 194.) And that "Tacitus, describing the horrible tortures which they suffered under Nero, says, 'They were detested for their flagitious practices; possessed with an abominable superstition, and condemned not so much for their supposed crime of firing the city, as from the hatred of all mankind,'" (p. 195.)

And "their condition," you say, "continued much the same, till they were established by the civil power: during all which time they were constantly insulted and calumniated by their Heathen adversaries, as a stupid, credulous, impious sect, the very scum of mankind," (ibid.) In a word, both with regard to prejudice and persecution, I read in your following page. "The Heathen magistrates would not give themselves the trouble, to make the least inquiry into their manners or doctrines; but condemned

them for the mere name, without examination or trial: treating a Christian of course as guilty of every crime, as an enemy of the gods, emperors, laws, and of nature itself." p. 196.

12. If then the end of those miraculous powers was, to overcome inveterate prejudices, and to enable the Christians to bear up against the shocks of persecution:" how can you possibly conceive that those powers should cease, while some of the apostles were living? With what colour can you assert, that they were less wanted for these ends, in the second and third, than in the apostolic age? With what shadow of reason can you maintain, that (if they ever subsisted at all) they were finally withdrawn, before Christianity was established by the civil power? Then indeed these ends did manifestly cease; persecution was at an end; and the inveterate prejudices which so long obtained, were in great measure rooted up: another plain reason why the powers which were to balance these, should remain in the church so long, and no longer.

13. You go on to acquaint us with the excellencies of your performance. "The reader," you say, "will find in these sheets, none of those arts, which are commonly employed by disputants to perplex a good cause, or to palliate a bad one: no subtle refinements, forced constructions, or evasive distinctions, but plain reasoning grounded on plain facts, and published with an honest and disinterested view, to free the minds of men, from an inveterate imposture. I have shewn that the ancient Fathers, by whom that delusion was imposed, were extremely credulous and superstitious: possessed with strong prejudices, and scrupling no art or means by which they might propagate the same." (p. 31.) Surely, Sir, you add the latter part of this paragraph, on purpose to confute the former: for just here you use one of the unfairest arts, which the most dishonest disputant can employ: in endeavouring to forestall the judgment of the reader, and to prejudice him against those men, on whom he ought not to pass any sentence, before he has heard the evidence.

1. In the beginning of your *introductory discourse*, you declare the reasons which moved you to publish it. "One of these," you say, "was the late increase of Popery in this kingdom; chiefly occasioned," as you suppose, "by the confident assertions of the Romish emissaries, that there has been a succession of miracles in their church, from the apostolic to the present age," (p. 41.) To obviate this plea, you would "settle some rule of discerning the true from the false; so as to give a reason for admitting the miracles of one age, and rejecting those of another," p. 44.

2. This has a pleasing sound, and is extremely well imagined to prejudice a Protestant reader in your favour. You then slide with great art into your subject. "This claim of a miraculous power, now peculiar to the Church of Rome, was asserted in all Christian countries till the Reformation," (p. 44.) "But then the cheat was detected: nay, and men began to suspect, that the church had long been governed by the same arts," (p. 45.) "For it was easy to trace them up to the primitive church, though not to fix the time when the cheat began; to shew, how long after the days of the apostles, the miraculous gifts continued in the church," (p. 46.) However, it is commonly believed, that they continued till Christianity was the established religion. Some indeed extend them to the fourth and fifth centuries: (p. 50.) but these, you say, betray the Protestant cause; "For in the third, fourth, and fifth, the chief corruptions of Popery were introduced, at least the seeds of them sown." "By these I mean monkery; the worship of relics; invocation of saints; prayers for the dead; the superstitious use of images; of the sacraments; of the sign of the cross, and of the consecrated oil," p. 52.

3. I have nothing to do with the fourth or fifth century. But to what you allege in support of this charge, so far as it relates to the third century, I have a few things to reply.

And, first, you quote not one line from any Father in the third century, in favour of "monkery, the worship of

relics, the invocation of saints, or the superstitious use either of images, or consecrated oil." How is this, Sir? You brought eight accusations at once against the Fathers of the third, as well as the following centuries: and as to five of the eight, when we call for the proof, you have not one word to say! As to the sixth, "In the sacrament of the Eucharist, several abuses were introduced." (p. 57.) You instance, first, in mixing wine with water. But how does it appear, that this was any abuse at all? Or, that "Irenæus declared it to have been taught as well as practised by our Saviour?" (p. 57.) The words you quote to prove this, do not prove it at all; they simply relate a matter of fact: "Taking the bread he confessed it to be his body, and the mixed cup, he affirmed it was his blood." (p. 58.) You cannot be ignorant of this fact, that the cup used after the paschal supper, was always mixed with water. But "Cyprian declared, this mixture to have been enjoined to himself by a divine revelation."* If he did, that will not prove it to be an abuse: so that you are wide of the point still. You instance next in their sending the bread to the sick; which (as well as the mixture) is mentioned by Justin Martyr. This fact likewise we allow: but you have not proved it to be an abuse. I grant, that near a hundred years after, some began to have a superstitious regard for this bread. But, that in "Tertullian's days it was carried home and locked up as a divine treasure," I call upon you to prove: as also, that infant-communion was an abuse; or the stiling it the sacrifice of the body of Christ. (p. 59.) I believe "the offering it up for the martyrs was an abuse; and that this with "the superstitious use of the sign of the cross" were, if not the earliest of all, yet as early as any which crept into the Christian church.

4. It is certain "praying for the dead was common in the second century," (p. 60:) you might have said, and in

* Accipiens panem, suum corpus esse confitebatur; et temperamentum calicis, suum sanguinem confirmavit.

the first also; seeing that petition, *Thy kingdom come*, manifestly concerns the saints in Paradise, as well as those upon earth. But it is far from certain, that "the purpose of this was, to procure relief and refreshment to the departed souls in some intermediate state of expiatory pains;" or, that this was the general "opinion of those times."

5. As to the "consecrated oil," (p. 63,) you seem entirely to forget, that it was neither St. Jerome, nor St. Chrysostom, but St. James, who said, 'Is any sick among you? Let him send for the elders of the church. And let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up,' Ch. v. ver. 14, 15.

The sum is: you have charged the Fathers of the third century with eight of "the chief corruptions of Popery:" 1. Monkery, 2. The worship of relics, 3. Invocation of saints, 4. The superstitious use of images, 5. Of the consecrated oil, 6. Of the sacraments, 7. Of the sign of the cross, 8. Praying for the dead.

And what is all this heavy charge come to at last? Why just thus much: some of them, in the beginning of the third century, did superstitiously use the sign of the cross: and others in the middle of that century offered up the eucharist for the martyrs on their annual festivals; though how you make this, "the superstitious use of the sacraments," I know not, or how these come to be the "chief corruptions of Popery." Praying thus far for the dead, 'That God would shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten his kingdom,' and anointing the sick with oil, you will not easily prove to be any corruptions at all.

As to monkery, the worship of relics, invocation of saints, and the superstitious use of images; you have not even attempted to prove, that these Fathers were guilty: so that, for aught appears, you might as well have charged them on the apostles. "Yet it is no more," you solemnly assure us, "than what fact and truth oblige us to say!" (p. 65.) When I meet with any of these assurances for the time to come, I shall remember to stand upon my guard.

6. In the following pages you are arguing against the miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries. After which you add, "But if these must be rejected, where then are we to stop? And to what period must we confine ourselves? This indeed is the grand difficulty, and what has puzzled all the other doctors, who have considered the same question before me," (p. 71.) Sir, your memory is short. In this very discourse you yourself said just the contrary. You told us awhile ago, that not only Dr. Marshall, Mr. Dodwell, and Archbishop Tillotson, but "the generality of the Protestant doctors were agreed, "to what period" they should confine themselves: believing, that "miracles subsisted through the three first centuries, and ceased in the beginning of the fourth," p. 46. et seq.

7. However, that none of them may ever be puzzled any more, you will "lay down some general principles, which may lead us to a more rational solution of the matter, than any that has hitherto been offered." (ibid.) Here again I was all attention. And what did the mountain bring forth? What are these general principles, preceded by so solemn a declaration, and laid down for thirteen pages together? (p. 71—84.) Why, they are dwindled down into one, "That the forged miracles of the fourth century taint the credit of all the later miracles!" I should desire you to prove, that the miracles of the fourth century were *all forged*, but that it is not material to our question.

8. But you endeavour to shew it is. "For that surprising confidence," you say, "with which the Fathers of the fourth age have affirmed as true what they themselves had forged, or at least knew to be forged," (a little more proof of that,) "makes us suspect, that so bold a defiance of truth could not become general at once, but must have been carried gradually to that height by custom and the example of former times," (p. 84.) It does not appear that it did *become general* till long after the fourth century. And as this supposition is not sufficiently proved, the inference from it is nothing worth.

9. You say, Secondly, "This age, in which Christianity

was established, had no occasion for any miracles. They would not therefore begin to forge miracles, at a time when there was no particular temptation to it." (ibid.) Yes, the greatest temptation in the world, if they were such men as you suppose. If they were men that "would scruple no art or means to enlarge their own credit and authority," they would naturally "begin to forge miracles" at that time, when real miracles were no more.

10. You say, Thirdly, "The later Fathers had equal piety with the earlier, but more learning and less credulity. If these then be found either to have forged miracles themselves, or propagated what they knew to be forged, or to have been deluded by the forgeries of others, it must excite the same suspicion of their predecessors." (p. 85.) I answer, 1. It is not plain that the later Fathers had equal piety with the earlier; nor, 2. That they had less credulity. It seems some of them had much more; witness Hilarion's camel, and smelling a devil or sinner; (Free Inquiry, p. 89, 90) though even he was not so quick-scented as St. Pachomius, who (as many believe to this day) could 'smell a heretic at a mile's distance.' But if, 3, the earlier Fathers were holier than the later, they were not only less likely to delude others, but (even on Plato's supposition) to be deluded themselves. For they would have more assistance from God.

11. But you say, "Fourthly, The earlier ages of the church were not purer than the later. Nay, in some respects they were worse. For there never was any age in which so many rank heresies were professed, or so many spurious books forged and published, under the names of Christ and his apostles," (Introd. Disc. p. 86:) "several of which are cited by the most eminent Fathers of those ages, as of equal authority with the Scriptures. And none can doubt but those who would forge, or make use of forged books, would make use of forged miracles," p. 87.

I answer, 1. It is allowed, that before the end of the third century the church was greatly degenerated from its first purity. Yet I doubt not, 2. But abundantly more "*rank*

heresies" have been publickly *professed* in many later ages. But they were not publickly *protested* against, and therefore historians did not record them. 3. You cannot but know it has always been the judgment of learned men, (which you are at liberty to refute if you are able,) that the far greater part of those spurious books have been forged by heretics; and that many more were compiled by weak, well-meaning men, from what had been orally delivered down from the apostles. But, 4. There have been in the church from the beginning men who had only the name of Christians. And these doubtless were capable of pious frauds (so called.) But this ought not to be charged upon the whole body. Add to this, 5, what is observed by Mr. Daille: 'I impute a great part of this mischief to those men, who, before the invention of printing, were the transcribers and copiers out of manuscripts. We may well presume that these men took the same liberty in forging as St. Jerome complains they did in corrupting books; especially since this course was beneficial to them, which the other was not.' Much more to the same effect we have in his treatise *Of the right use of the Fathers*, part I. chap. iii. ——N. B. These transcribers were not all Christians, no, not in name: perhaps few, if any of them, in the first century. 6. By what evidences do you prove, that these spurious books "are frequently cited by the most eminent Fathers, as not only genuine, but of equal authority with the Scriptures themselves?" Or, lastly, that they either forged these books themselves, or made use of what they knew to be forged? These things also you are not to take for granted, but to prove, before your argument can be of force.

12. We are come at last to your "general conclusion, There is no sufficient reason to believe, that any miraculous powers subsisted in any age of the church after the times of the apostles," p. 91.

But pretended miracles, you say, rose thus. "As the high authority of the apostolic writings excited some of the most learned Christians" (prove that) "to forge books

under their names; so the great fame of the apostolic miracles, would naturally excite some of the most crafty, when the apostles were dead, to attempt some juggling tricks in imitation of them. And when these artful pretenders had maintained their ground through the three first centuries, the leading clergy of the fourth understood their interest too well to part with the old plea of miraculous gifts," p. 92.

Round assertions indeed! But surely, Sir, you do not think that reasonable men will take these for proofs! You are here advancing a charge of the blackest nature. But where are your vouchers? Where are the witnesses to support it? Hitherto you have not been able to produce one, through a course of three hundred years; unless you bring in those Heathen, of whose senseless, shameless prejudices, you have yourself given so clear an account.

But you designed to produce your witnesses in the *Free Inquiry*, a year or two after the *Introductory Discourse* was published. So you condemn them first, and try them afterwards; you will pass sentence now, and hear the evidence by and by! A genuine specimen of that impartial regard to truth, which you *profess* on all occasions.

13. Another instance of this is in your marginal note. "The primitive Christians were perpetually reproached for their gross credulity." They were; but by whom? Why, by Jews and Heathens. Accordingly the two witnesses you produce here, are, Celsus the Jew, and Julian the apostate. But lest this should not suffice, you make them confess the charge. "The Fathers," your words are, "defend themselves by saying, that they did no more than the philosophers had always done: that Pythagoras's precepts were inculcated with an *ipse dixit*, and they found the same method useful with the vulgar," (p. 93.) And is this their *whole* defence? Do the very men to whom you refer, Origen and Arnobius, in the very tracts to which you refer, give no other answer, than this argument, *ad hominem?* Stand this as another genuine proof of Dr. Middleton's candour and impartiality!

14. A further proof of your "frank and open nature," and of your "contenting yourself with the discharge of your own conscience, by a free declaration of your real sentiments," I find in the very next page. Here you solemnly declare, "Christianity is confirmed by the evidence of such miracles, as, of all others on record, are the least liable to exception, and carry the clearest marks of their sincerity; being wrought by Christ and his apostles, for an end so great, so important, as to be highly worthy the interposition of the Deity: wrought by mean and simple men, and delivered by eye-witnesses, whose characters exclude the suspicion of fraud," (p. 94.) Sir, do you believe one word of what you so solemnly declare? You have yourself declared the contrary. But if you do not, where shall we have you? Or how can we believe you another time? How shall we know, I will not say, when you speak truth, but when you would have us think you do? By what criterion shall we distinguish between what is spoken in your real, and what in your personated character? How discern when you speak as Dr. Middleton, and when as the *public librarian?*

15. You go on. "By granting the Romanists but a single age of miracles after the apostles, we shall be entangled in difficulties whence we can never extricate ourselves, till we allow the same powers to the present age!" (p. 96.) I will allow them, however, three ages of miracles, and let them make what advantage of it they can.

You proceed. "If the Scriptures are a complete rule," (I reject the word *sufficient*, because it is ambiguous,) "we do not want the fathers as guides, or if clear, as interpreters. An esteem for them has carried many into dangerous errors, the neglect of them can have no ill consequences," (p. 97.) I answer, 1. The Scriptures are a complete rule of faith and practice; and they are clear in all necessary points. And yet their clearness does not prove, that they need not be explained; nor their completeness, that they need not be enforced. 2. The esteeming the writings of the three first centuries, not equally with, but next to the Scriptures, never carried any man yet into dangerous errors,

nor probably ever will. But it has brought many out of dangerous errors, and particularly out of the errors of popery. 3. The neglect, in *your* sense, of the primitive fathers, that is, the thinking they were all fools and knaves, has this natural consequence, (which I grant is no ill one, according to your principles,) to make all who are not real Christians, think Jesus of Nazareth and his apostles, just as honest and wise as they.

16. You afterwards endeavour to shew how the church of England came to have such an esteem for the ancient fathers. There are several particulars in this account which are liable to exception. But I let them pass, as they have little connexion with the point in question.

17. You conclude your *introductory discourse* thus: "The design of the present treatise, is to fix the religion of the protestants on its proper basis, that is, on the sacred Scriptures," (p. 111.) Here again you speak in your personated character; as also when you "freely own the primitive writers, to be of use in attesting and transmitting to us the genuine books of the holy Scriptures!" (p. 112.) Books, for the full attestation as well as safe transmission whereof, you have doubtless the deepest concern!

18. I cannot dismiss this discourse without observing, that the uncommon artfulness and disingenuity which glare through the whole, must needs give disgust to every honest and upright heart, nor is it any credit at all to the cause you have espoused. Nay, I am persuaded there are many in these kingdoms, who, though they think as you do concerning the Christian system, yet could not endure the thought of writing against it in the manner that you have done; of combating fraud (if it were so) with fraud, and practising the very thing which they professed to expose and abhor.

In your *Free Inquiry* itself you *propose*, *

1. "To draw out in order all the principal testimonies which relate to miraculous gifts, as they are found in the

* Free Inquiry, p. 1.

writings of the fathers, from the earliest ages after the apostles; whence we shall see at one view, the whole evidence by which they have hitherto been supported."

II. "To throw together all which those fathers have delivered, concerning the persons said to have been endued with those gifts."

III. "To illustrate the particular characters and opinions of the fathers who attest those miracles," (p. 2.)

IV. "To review all the several kinds of miracles which are pretended to have been wrought, and to observe from the nature of each how far they may reasonably be suspected."

V. "To refute some of the most plausible objections, which have been hitherto made."

I was in hopes you would have given, at least, in entering upon your main work, what you promised so long ago, an account of "The proper nature and condition of those miraculous powers, which are the subject of the whole dispute, as they are represented to us in the history of the gospel," (Pref. p. 10.) But as you do not appear to have any thought of doing it at all, you will give me leave at length to do it for you.

The original promise of these runs thus: 'These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover,' Mark xvi. 17, 18.

A further account is given of them by St. Peter, on the very day whereon that promise was fulfilled. 'This is that which is spoken of by the prophet Joel, And, it shall come to pass in the last days, (said God,) your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams,' Acts ii. 16, 17.

The account given by St. Paul is a little fuller than this: 'There are diversities of gifts,' (χαρισματων, the usual scriptural term for the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost) 'but

the same Spirit.—For to one is given the word of wisdom—to another the gifts of healing—to another the working of (other) miracles—to another prophecy—to another discernment of spirits—to another divers kinds of tongues.—to another the interpretation of tongues. All these worketh that one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will,' 1 Cor. xii. 8—11.

Hence we may observe, that the chief χαρισματα, spiritual gifts conferred on the apostolical church, were, 1. Casting out devils; 2. Speaking with new tongues; 3. Escaping dangers in which otherwise they must have perished; 4. Healing the sick; 5. Prophecy, foretelling things to come; 6. Visions; 7. Divine dreams; and, 8. Discerning of spirits.

Some of these appear to have been chiefly designed for the conviction of Jews and Heathens, as the casting out devils, and speaking with new tongues; some chiefly for the benefit of their fellow Christians, as healing the sick, foretelling the things to come, and the discernment of spirits; and all, in order to enable those who either wrought or saw them, to 'run with patience the race set before them,' through all the storms of persecution, which the most inveterate prejudice, rage, and malice, could raise against them.

I. 1. You are, first, "To draw out in order all the principal testimonies, which relate to miraculous gifts, as they are found in the writings of the fathers from the earliest ages after the apostles."

You begin with the apostolic fathers, that is, those who lived and conversed with the apostles. "There are several," you say, "of this character, whose writings still remain to us, St. Barnabas, St. Clemens, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, St. Hermas." "Now if those gifts had subsisted after the days of the apostles, these must have possessed a large share of them. But if any of them had, he would have mentioned it in his writings, which not one of them has done," (p. 3.)

The argument, fully proposed, runs thus:

If any such gifts had subsisted in them, or in their days, they must have mentioned them in their *Circular Epistles to the Churches* (for so their predecessors, the Apostles did :) but they did not mention any such gifts therein.

Sir, Your consequence is not of any force. As will easily appear by a parallel argument.

If such gifts had subsisted in St. Peter, or in his days, he must have mentioned them in his *Circular Epistles to the Churches*. But he does not mention any such gifts therein. Therefore they did not subsist in him, or in his days. Your argument, therefore, proves too much; nor can it conclude against an apostolic father, without concluding against the apostle too.

If, therefore, the apostolic fathers, had not mentioned any miraculous gifts, in their *Circular Epistles to the Churches*, you could not have inferred that they possessed none: since neither does he mention them in his Circular Epistles, whom you allow to have possessed them.

Of all the Apostles you can produce but one, St. Paul, who makes mention of those gifts. And that, not in his *Circular Epistles to the Churches*. For I know not that he wrote any such.

2. All this time I have been arguing on your own suppositions, that these five apostolic fathers, all wrote *Circular Epistles to the Churches*, and yet never mentioned these gifts therein. But neither of these suppositions is true. For, 1. Hermas wrote no Epistle at all: 2. Although the rest wrote Epistles to particular Churches, (Clemens to the Corinthians, Ignatius to the Romans, &c.) yet not one of them wrote any *Circular Epistles to the Churches*, like those of St. James and St. Peter, (unless we allow that to be a genuine epistle, which bears the name of St. Barnabas.) 3. You own, they all "speak of spiritual gifts, as abounding among the Christians of that age:" but assert, "These cannot mean any thing more, than faith, hope, and charity." (p. 3.) You assert—But the proof, Sir; I want the proof. Though I am but one of the *vulgar*, yet I am not half so *credulous* as you apprehend the first Christians to

have been. *Ipse dixi* will not satisfy me; I want plain, clear, logical proof; especially, when I consider, how much you build upon this; that is the main foundation whereon your hypothesis stands. You yourself must allow, that in the Epistle of St. Paul, πνευματικα χαρισματα, *spiritual gifts*, does always mean more than faith, hope, and charity; that it constantly means *miraculous gifts*. How then do you prove, that in the Epistles of St. Ignatius, it means quite another thing? Not miraculous gifts, but only "the ordinary gifts and graces of the gospel?" I thought "the reader" was to "find no evasive distinctions in the following sheets," (Pref. p. 31.) Prove then that this distinction is not evasive: that the same words mean absolutely different things. Till this is clearly and solidly done, reasonable men must believe that this and the like expressions mean the same thing in the writings of the apostolical fathers, as they do in the writings of the apostles; namely, not the *ordinary graces* of the gospel, but the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost.

3. You aim indeed at a proof, which would be home to the point, if you were but able to make it out. "These fathers themselves seem to disclaim all gifts of a more extraordinary kind. Thus Polycarp, in his Epistle to the Philippians, says, 'neither I, nor any other such as I am, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed Paul.' And in the same Epistle he declares, 'It was not granted to him to practise that, Be ye angry, and sin not.' St. Ignatius also in his Epistles to the Ephesians, says, 'These things I prescribe to you, not as if I were somebody extraordinary. For though I am bound for his name, I am not yet perfect in Christ Jesus.'" (p. 7, 8.) I think, verily, these extraordinary proofs may stand without any reply.

4. Yet you courteously add, "If from the passages referred to above, or any other, it should appear probable to any, that they were favoured on some occasions, with some extraordinary illuminations, visions, or divine impressions; I shall not dispute that point, but remind them only that these gifts were granted for their particular comfort, and

do not therefore in any manner affect, or relate to the question now before us." (p. 10.)

I ask pardon, Sir. These do so deeply affect, so nearly relate to the question now before us, even as stated by yourself, (Pref. p. 28,) that in allowing these, you give up the substance of the question. You yourself have declared, that one great end of the *extraordinary gifts* conferred on the apostles was, "To enable them to bear up against the shocks of popular rage and persecution." Now were not "extraordinary illuminations, visions, and impressions," if given at all, given for this very end? "For their particular comfort," as you now word it? Therefore in allowing these to the apostolic fathers, you allow *extraordinary gifts*, which had been formerly granted to the apostles, to have "subsisted in the church after the days of the apostles," and for the same end as they did before.

5. Therefore "the apostolic writers have" not "left us in the dark," with regard to our present argument. And consequently your triumph comes too soon: "Here then we have an interval of half a century, in which we have the strongest reason to presume, that the extraordinary gifts of the apostolic age were withdrawn," (p. 9.) No: not if all "the apostolic fathers speak of spiritual gifts, as abounding among the Christians of that age:" not if "extraordinary illuminations, visions, and divine impressions still subsisted among them." For as to your now putting in, "as exerted openly in the church for the conviction of unbelievers." I must desire you to put it out again; it comes a great deal too late. The question between you and me was stated without it, above a hundred pages back. Although if it be admitted, it will do you no service: seeing your proposition is overthrown, if there were "miraculous gifts after the days of the apostles," whether they were "openly exerted for the conviction of unbelievers" or not.

6. I was a little surprised, that you should take your leave of the apostolic fathers so soon. But upon looking forward, my surprise was at an end: I found you were not

guilty of any design to spare them: but only delayed your remarks till the reader should be prepared for what might have shocked him, had it stood in its proper place.

I do not find indeed, that you make any objection to any part of the Epistles of Ignatius, nor of the Catholic Epistle which is inscribed with the name of Barnabas. This clearly convinces me, you have not read it; I am apt to think, not one page of it; seeing, if you had, you would never have let slip such an opportunity of exposing one that was called an apostolic father.

7. But it would have been strange, if you had not somewhere brought in the famous phœnix of Clemens Romanus. And yet you are very merciful upon that head, barely remarking concerning it, That "he alleged the ridiculous story of the phœnix, as a type and proof of the resurrection," (p. 59.) Whether "all the Heathen writers treat it as nothing else but a mere fable," I know not. But that it is so, is certain; and consequently the argument drawn from it is weak and inconclusive. Yet it will not hence follow, that either Clemens was a wicked man, or that he had none of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

8. There is no real blemish to be found, in the whole character of St. Polycarp. But there is one circumstance left upon record concerning him, which has the appearance of weakness. And with this you do not fail to acquaint your reader at a convenient season: namely, "That in the most ancient dispute, concerning the time of holding Easter, St. Polycarp and Anicetus severally alleged apostolic tradition for their different practice," (p. 60.) And it is not improbable, that both alleged what was true; that in a point of so little importance the apostles varied themselves; some of them observing it on the fourteenth day of the moon, and others not. But be this as it may, it can be no proof, either that Polycarp was not an holy man, or that he was not favoured with the extraordinary, as well as ordinary gifts of the Spirit.

9. With regard to the "narrative of his martyrdom," you affirm, "It is one of the most authentic pieces in all

primitive antiquity," (p. 124.) I will not vouch for its authenticity: nor therefore for the story of the dove, the flame forming an arch, the fragrant smell, or the revelation to Pionius. But your attempt to *account for* these things, is truly curious. You say, "An arch of flame round his body is an appearance which might easily happen, from the common effects of wind. And the dove said to fly out of him, might be conveyed into the wood which was prepared to consume him," (p. 129.) How much more naturally may we account for both, by supposing the whole to be a modern fiction, written on occasion of that account mentioned by Eusebius, but lost many ages ago? But whatever may be thought of this account of his death, neither does this affect the question, Whether during his life he was endued with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost.

10. There is one of those whom you style apostolic fathers yet behind, of whom you talk full as familiarly as of the rest. I mean, Hermas: "to whom," you say, "some impute the fraud of forging the Sibylline books," (p. 37.) It would not have been amiss, if you had told us, which of the ancients, whether Christian, Jew, or Heathen, ever accused him of this. If none ever did, some will be apt to think, it is giving a person but hard measure, to bring an accusation against him which never was heard of, till sixteen hundred years after his death.

But I can the more easily excuse you, because he is a person whom you are wholly unacquainted with. Though it is much curiosity did not lead you, when you had archbishop Wake's translation in your hand, to read over if it were but half a dozen pages of his famous Shepherd. But charity obliges me to believe you never did. Otherwise I cannot conceive you would so peremptorily affirm, of him and the rest together, "There is not the least claim or pretension, in all their several pieces, to any of these extraordinary gifts, which are the subject of this inquiry," (p. 3.) I am amazed! Sir, have you never a friend in the world? If you were yourself ignorant of the whole affair? would no one inform you, that all the three books of

Hermas, from the first page to the last, are nothing else than a recital of his "extraordinary gifts," his visions, prophecies, and revelations?

Can you expect after this, that any man in his senses, should take your word for any thing under heaven? That any one should credit any thing which you affirm? Or believe you any farther than he can see you? Jesus whom you persecute can forgive you this; but how can you forgive yourself? One would think, you should be crying out, day and night, 'The Shepherd of Hermas will not let me sleep.'

11. You proceed to the testimony of "Justin Martyr, who wrote about fifty years after the apostles," (p. 10.) He says, (I translate his words literally), "There are prophetic gifts among us even until now. You may see with us both women and men, having gifts from the Spirit of God." He particularly insists on that of "casting out devils, as what every one might see with his own eyes."

"Irenæus," who wrote somewhat later, "affirms, 'That all who were truly disciples of Jesus, wrought miracles in his name; some cast out devils; others had visions, or the knowledge of future events; others healed the sick,' (p. 11.) "And as to raising the dead, he declares it 'to have been frequently performed on necessary occasions, by great fasting, and the joint supplication of the church. And we hear many,' says he, 'speaking with all kinds of tongues, and expounding the mysteries of God,'" p. 12.

"Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, who lived in the same age, speaks of casting out devils as then common in the church," ibid.

12. "Tertullian, who flourished toward the end of the second century, challenges the Heathen magistrates, to 'call before any of their tribunals, any person possessed with a devil. And if the evil spirit, when commanded by any Christian, did not confess himself to be a a devil, who elsewhere called himself a god, they should take the life of that Christian,'" ibid.

"Minutius Felix, supposed to have written in the begi ning of the third century, addressing himself to his heath friend, says, 'The greatest part of you know what confe sions the demons make concerning themselves, when v expel them out of the bodies of men,'" p. 13.

13. "Origen, something younger than Minutius, declare that there remained still the manifest indications of t Holy Spirit. 'For the Christians,' says he, 'cast out devi perform many cures, foretel things to come.—And ma have been converted to Christianity by visions. I ha seen many examples of this sort,' (p. 14.

"In another place he says, 'Signs of the Holy Gho were shewn at the beginning of the teaching of Jesus (not as you translate it, '*miracles began with the preachi of Jesus;*' that is quite a different thing:) 'more we shewn after his ascension, but afterwards fewer. Howev even now there are still some remains of them with a fe whose souls are cleansed by the word, and a life conformab to it,'" (p. 15.) "Again, 'Some,' says he, 'heal the sic I myself have seen many so healed, of loss of senses, madne and innumerable other evils, which neither men nor dev can cure,' (ibid.) 'And this is done, not by magical ar but by prayer, and certain plain adjurations, such as a common Christian may use; for generally common men things of this kind,'" p. 16.

14. "Cyprian, who wrote about the middle of the thi century, says, 'Beside the visions of the night, even in t day-time, innocent children among us are filled with t Holy Spirit; and in ecstacies see, and hear, and speak tho things by which God is pleased to admonish and instru us,' (ibid.) Elsewhere he particularly mentions the casti out devils: 'which,' says he, 'either depart immediatel or by degrees, according to the faith of the patient, or t grace of him that works the cure,' p. 17.

"Arnobius, who is supposed to have written in the ye of Christ 303, tells us, 'Christ appears even now to m unpolluted, and eminently holy, who love him:—who

very name puts evil spirits to flight, strikes the prophets dumb, deprives the sooth-sayers of the power of answering, and frustrates the acts of arrogant magicians,' p. 18.

"Lactantius, who wrote about the same time, speaking of evil spirits, says, 'Being adjured by Christians, they retire out of the bodies of men—confess themselves to be demons, and tell their names, even the same which are adored in the temples,' ibid.

15. "These," you say, "are the principal testimonies which assert miraculous gifts through the three first centuries; which might be supported by many more of the same kind, from the same as well as different writers. But none can scruple to risk the fate of the cause upon these," (p. 19.) Thus far I do not scruple it. I do not doubt but the testimonies of these nine witnesses, added to the evidence of the apostolic Fathers, will satisfy every impartial man with regard to the point in question. Yet I see no cause, if there are nine witnesses more, to give up their evidence; seeing you may possibly raise objections against these which the others are unconcerned in.

If then you should invalidate what I have to reply in behalf of the witnesses now produced, you will have done but half your work: I shall afterwards require a fair hearing for the others also.

16. You close this head with remarking, 1. "That the silence of all the apostolic writers on the subject of these gifts, must dispose us to conclude they were withdrawn," (p. 19.) O, Sir, mention this no more. I entreat you, never name their silence again. They speak loud enough to shame you as long as you live. You cannot therefore talk with any grace of "the pretended revival of them, after a cessation of forty or fifty years;" or draw conclusions from that which never was.

Your second remark is perfectly new: I dare say none ever observed before yourself, that this particular circumstance of the primitive Christians, "carried with it an air of imposture, namely, their 'challenging all the world to come and see the miracles which they wrought!'" (p. 21.)

To complete the argument, you should have added, And their *staking their lives* upon the performance of them.

17. I doubt you have not gone one step forward yet. You have indeed advanced many bold assertions; but you have not fairly proved one single conclusion with regard to the point in hand. But a natural effect of your lively imagination is, that from this time you argue more and more weakly; inasmuch, as the farther you go, the more things you imagine (and only imagine) yourself to have proved. Consequently, as you gather up more mistakes every step you take, every page is more precarious than the former.

II. 1. The second thing you proposed was, "To throw together all which those Fathers have delivered concerning the persons said to have been endued with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit," p. 21.

"Now whenever we think or speak with reverence," say you, "of those primitive times, it is always with regard to these very Fathers, whose testimonies I have been collecting. And they were indeed the chief persons and champions of the Christian cause, the pastors, bishops, and martyrs of the primitive church; namely, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, Origen, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius." Sir, you stumble at the threshold. A common dictionary may inform you that these were not all, either pastors, bishops, or martyrs.

2. You go on as you set out. "Yet none of these have any where affirmed, that they themselves were endued with any power of working miracles," (p. 22.) You should say, with any of those *extraordinary gifts* promised by our Lord, and conferred on his apostles.

No! Have "none of these any where affirmed, that they themselves" were endued with any extraordinary gifts? What think you of the very first of them, Justin Martyr? Either you are quite mistaken in the account you give of him elsewhere, (p. 27, 30,) or he *affirmed this of himself* over and over. And as to Cyprian, you will by and by spend several pages together, on the extraordinary gifts he *affirmed himself* to be endued with, p. 101.

But suppose they had not "any where affirmed *this* of themselves," what would you infer therefrom? That they were not endued with any extraordinary gifts? Then by the very same method of arguing, you might prove that neither St. Peter, nor James, nor John, were endued with any such. For neither do they "any where affirm this of themselves" in any of the writings which they left behind them.

3. Your argument concerning the apostolic Fathers is just as conclusive as this. For if you say, "The writers following the apostolic Fathers, do not affirm them to have had any miraculous gifts; therefore they had none:" by a parity of reason you must say, "The writers following the apostles do not affirm them to have had any miraculous gifts; therefore the apostles had none."

4. Your next argument against the existence of those gifts is, "That the Fathers do not tell us the names of them which had them." This is not altogether true. The names of Justin Martyr and Cyprian are pretty well known: as is, among the learned, that of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria. (p. 106, 212.) But what if they did not? Supposing miraculous powers "were openly exerted in the church:" and that not only they themselves, but "every one else might see this whenever they pleased:" if any Heathen might *come and see* whenever he pleased, what could a reasonable man desire more? What did it signify to him to know the names of those whom he heard prophesying, or saw working miracles? Though without doubt, whoever saw the miracles wrought, might easily learn the names of those that wrought them; which nevertheless the Christians had no need to publish abroad, to expose them so much the more to the rage and malice of their persecutors.

5. Your third argument is, "The Christian workers of miracles were always charged with imposture by their adversaries. Lucian tells us, 'Whenever any crafty juggler went to the Christians, he grew rich immediately.' And Celsus represents the Christian wonder-workers as mere

'vagabonds and common cheats, who rambled about to fairs and markets,'" p. 23.

And is it any wonder, that either a Jew or a Heathen should represent them thus? Sir, I do not blame you for not believing the Christian system, but for betraying so gross a partiality: for gleaning up every scrap of Heathen scandal, and palming it upon us as unquestionable evidence; and for not translating even these miserable fragments with any accuracy or faithfulness. Instead of giving us the text, bad as it is, you commonly substitute a paraphrase yet worse. And this the unlearned reader naturally supposes to be a faithful translation. It is no credit to your cause if it needs such supports. And this is no credit to you if it does not.

To that of Lucian and Celsus, you add the evidence of Cæcilius too, who calls, say you, "these workers of miracles, a lurking nation, shunning the light." Then they were strangely altered all on a sudden. For you told us that just before, (p. 20,) they were proving themselves cheats by a widely different method; by "calling out both upon magistrates and people, and challenging all the world to come and see what they did!"

I was not aware, that you had yet begun "to throw together all which the Fathers have delivered, concerning the persons said to have been endued with those extraordinary gifts." And, it seems, you have made an end of it! And accordingly you proceed to sum up the evidence, to "observe upon the whole, From these characters of the primitive wonder-workers, as given both by friends and enemies, we may fairly conclude that the gifts of those ages were generally engrossed by private Christians, who travelled about from city to city, to assist the ordinary preaching, in the conversion of Pagans, by the extraordinary miracles they pretended to perform," p. 24.

"Characters given both by friends and enemies!" Pray, Sir, what friends have you cited for this character? Or what enemies, except only Celsus the Jew? (And you are

a miserable interpreter for him.) So from the single testimony of such a witness, you lay it down as an oracular truth, that all the miracle-workers of the three first ages, were vagabonds and common cheats, rambling about from city to city, to assist in converting heathens, by tricks and imposture! And this you ingenuously call, "Throwing together all which the Fathers have delivered concerning them!"

9. But to complete all, "Here again," say you, "we see a dispensation of things ascribed to God, quite different from that which we meet with in the New Testament," (p. 24.) *We see a dispensation!* Where? Not in the primitive church. Not in the writings of one single Christian: not of one Heathen; and only of one Jew: (for poor Celsus had not a second; though he multiplies under your forming hand, into a cloud of witnesses.) He alone ascribes this to the ancient Christians, which you in their name ascribe to God. With the same regard to truth you go on, "In those days the power of working miracles" (you should say, *The extraordinary gifts)* "was committed to none but those who presided in the church of Christ." *Ipse dixit*, for that. But I cannot take your word: especially when the apostles and evangelists say otherwise. "But upon the pretended revival of those powers."—Sir, we do not *pretend* the *revival* of them: seeing we shall believe they never were intermitted, till you can prove the contrary. "We find the administration of them committed, not to those who had the government of the church; not to the bishops, the martyrs, to the principal champions of the Christian cause, but to boys, to women, and above all, to 'private and obscure laymen:' not only of an inferior, but sometimes also of a bad character."

Surely, Sir, you talk in your sleep. You could never talk thus, if you had your eyes open, and your understanding about you. "We find the administration of them committed, not to those who had the government of the church." No! I thought Cyprian had had the government of the church at Carthage, and Dionysius at Alexandria! "Not

to the bishops." Who were these then, that were mentioned last? Bishops or no bishops? "Not to the martyrs." Well, if Cyprian was neither bishop nor martyr, I hope you will allow Justin's claim. "Not to the principal champions of the Christian cause."—And yet you told us three pages since, that "these very Fathers were the chief champions of the Christian cause in those days!" "But to boys, and to women." I answer, 'This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, It shall come to pass that I will pour out my Spirit, saith the Lord, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy!' A circumstance which turns this argument full against you, till you openly avow you do not believe those prophecies. "And above all, to private and obscure laymen, not only of an inferior, but sometimes of a bad character." I answer, 1. You cite only one *Anti-nicene* writer, to prove them committed to "private and obscure laymen." And he says this and no more, 'Generally private men do things of this kind.'* By what rule of grammar you construe ἰδιωται, *private and obscure laymen*, I know not. 2. To prove "these were sometimes men of a bad character," you quote also but one *Anti-nicene* Father. (For I presume you will not assert the genuineness of the (so called) *Apostolical Constitutions.*) And that one is, in effect, none at all. It is Tertullian, who in his *Prescription against Heretics*, says, 'They will add many things of the authority (or power) of every heretical preacher: that they raised the dead, healed the sick, foretold things to come."† *They will add*—But did Tertullian believe them? There is no shadow of reason to think he did. And if not, what is all this to the purpose? No more than the tales of later ages which you add, concerning the miracles wrought by "bones and relics."

10. "These things," you add, "are so strange, as to give just reason to suspect, that there was some original

* Ὡς πολλοὶ ἰδιῶται τὸ τοιοῦτον πεφεύγασι.

Origen. Cont. Cels. l. vii.

† Adjicient multa de autoritate cujusque doctoris haeretici, illos mortuos suscitasse, debiles reformasse, &c.

fraud in the case, and that those strolling wonder-workers, by a dexterity of juggling, imposed upon the pious Fathers, whose strong prejudices and ardent zeal for the interest of Christianity, would dispose them to embrace, without examination, whatever seemed to promote so good a cause," (p. 25.) You now speak tolerably plain, and would be much disappointed if those, who have no strong prejudices for Christianity, did not apply what you say of these strolling wonder-workers to the apostles, as well as their successors.

11. A very short answer will suffice. "These things are so strange." They are more strange than true. You have not proved one jot or tittle of them yet. Therefore the consequences you draw must fall to the ground till you find them some better support.

12. Nay, but "it is certain and notorious," you say, "that this was really the case in some instances:" that is, that "strolling, juggling wonder-workers imposed upon the pious Fathers," (p. 26.) Sir, I must come in again with my cuckoo's note, the proof? Where is the proof? Till this is produced I cannot allow that this is certain and notorious, even in one individual instance.

13. Let us now stand still and observe, what it is you have made out, under this second head. What you proposed was, "To throw together all which the primitive Fathers had delivered, concerning the persons said to be then endued with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit." And how have you executed what you proposed? You have thrown together a quotation from a Jew, two from Heathens, three quarters of a line from Origen! and three lines from Tertullian! (nothing at all, it is true, to the point in question. But that you could not help.)

14. And this, it seems, is "all you have been able to draw, from any of the primitive writers, concerning the persons who were endued with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost!" (p. 21.) Permit me, Sir, to apply to you, what was spoken on another occasion. '*Sir, the well is deep, and thou hast nothing to draw*: neither sufficient

skill, nor industry and application. Besides, you are resolved to draw out of the well, what was never in it, and must of course lose all your labour.

III. 1. You are, "Thirdly, to shew the particular characters and opinions of those Fathers who attest these gifts." Suffer me to remind you, that you mentioned nine of these, Justin, Iræneus, Theophilus, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, Origen, Cyprian, Arnobius, and Lactantius. You are therefore now to shew what were the "particular characters and opinions of these Fathers." Indeed I should think, their opinions had some small relation to the question. But since you think otherwise, I am prepared to hear you.

You premise, "That an unexceptionable witness must have both judgment and honesty:" (p. 26:) and then passing over the apostolic Fathers, (as supposing them on your side,) endeavour to shew, that these other Fathers had neither.

2. You begin with Justin Martyr, who, you say, "frequently affirms, that the miraculous gift of expounding the holy Scriptures, or the mysteries of God, was granted to himself, by the special grace of God," (p. 27.) Upon which I observe, 1. It has not yet been agreed among learned men, that *declaring the mysteries of God*, is the same thing with *expounding the holy Scriptures*. 2. It is not clear, that Justin does affirm, his being endued either with one or the other. At least, not from the passages you cite. The first, literally thus: *'He hath revealed to us whatsoever things we have understood by his grace from the Scriptures also:' the other, †'I have not any such power; but God has given me the grace to understand his Scriptures.' Now, Sir, by which of these does it appear, that Justin affirms he had the *miraculous* gift of *expounding* the Scriptures?

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* Αποκαλυψεν ω ημιν παντα οσα και απο των γραφων δια της χαριτος αυτου γεγνωκαμεν. Dialogue, part 2.

† Ουδε γαρ δυναμις εμοι τοιαυτη τις εστιν, αλλα χαρις παρα θεου εδοθη μοι ειδεναι τας γραφας αυτου. Ibid.

3. However *you* will affirm it, were it only to have the pleasure of confuting it. In order to which you recite three passages from his writings, wherein he interprets Scripture weakly enough: and then add, (after a strained compliment to Dr. Grabe, and a mangled translation of one of his remarks,) "His works are but little else than a wretched collection of interpretations of the same kind. Yet this pious Father insists, that they were all suggested to him from heaven," (p. 30.) No; neither the one nor the other. Neither do interpretations of Scripture (good or bad) make the tenth part of his writings; nor does he insist, that all those which are found therein, "were suggested to him from heaven." This does not follow from any passage you have cited yet: nor from his saying in a particular case, "Do you think I could have understood these things in the Scriptures, if I had not by the will of God received the grace to understand them?"

4. However, now you clap your wings. "What credit," say you, "can be due to this Father, in the report of other people's gifts, who was so grossly deceived, or willing at least to deceive others, in this confident attestation of his own?" The answer is plain and obvious. It is not clear, that he attests his own at all. Consequently, as yet his credit is unblemished.

"But he did not understand Hebrew, and gave a wrong derivation of the Hebrew word, Satan." Allowing this, that he was no good etymologist, his credit as a witness may be as good as ever.

5. But to blast his credit for ever, you will now reckon up all the heresies which he held. And first, "He believed the doctrine of the Millennium; or, 'That all the saints should be raised in the flesh, and reign with Christ, in the enjoyment of all sensual pleasures, for a thousand years before the general resurrection," (p. 31.) These you mark as though they were Justin's words. I take knowledge you hold, no faith is to be kept with heretics; and that all means are fair which conduce to so good an end, as driving the Christian heresy out of the world.

It is by this principle only that I can account for your adding, "Which doctrine" [that of their enjoying all sensual pleasures] "he deducts from the testimony of the prophets: and of St. John the apostle; and was followed in it by the fathers of the second and third centuries."

The doctrine, (as you very well know,) which Justin "deduced from the prophets and the apostles," and "in which he was" undoubtedly "followed by the fathers of the second and third centuries," is this:

The souls of them who have been martyred for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and who have not worshipped the beast, neither received his mark, shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead shall not live again, until the thousand years are finished. Now to say, they believed this, is neither more nor less than to say, they believed the Bible.

6. The second heresy you charge him with is the believing, "that those *sons* of God, mentioned Gen. vi. 4. of whom it is there said, 'They came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them;' were evil angels." (p. 32.) And I allow, he too lightly received this on the testimony of the Jewish commentators. But this only proves, that he was a fallible man: not that he was a knave; or that he had not eyes and ears.

7. You charge him, thirdly, with "treating the spurious books, published under the names of the Sybil and Hystaspes, with the same reverence as the prophetic Scriptures," (ibid.) His words are, 'By the power of evil spirits, it was made death, to read the books of Hystaspes, or of the Sibyl, or of the prophets.' Well: how does this prove, that he "treated those books with the same reverence as the prophetic Scriptures?"

But "it is certain," you say, "that from this example and authority of Justin, they were held in the highest veneration, by the fathers and rulers of the church, through all succeeding ages," (ibid.)

I do not conceive, it is certain. I wait your proof, first, of the fact: next, of the reason you assign for it. The

fact itself, that "these books were held in the highest veneration, by the fathers and rulers through all succeeding ages," is in no wise proved by that single quotation from Clemens Alexandrinus, (p. 34.) wherein he urges the Heathens with the testimonies of their own authors, of the Sibyl, and of Hystaspes. We cannot infer from hence, that he himself "held them in the highest veneration:" much less, that all the fathers did. And as to the reason you assign for that veneration, the example and authority of Justin, you cite no writer of any kind, good or bad. So he that will believe it may.

But "some" you tell us, "impute the forging of these books to Justin." Be pleased to tell us, likewise, who those are; and what grounds they allege for that imputation. Till then it can be of no signification.

8. You charge him, fourthly, "With believing that silly story, concerning the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament: with saying, that he himself, when at Alexandria, saw the remains of the cells in which the translators were shut up: and with making a considerable mistake in the chronology relating thereto," (p. 37.) And if all this be allowed, and over and above, that he "frequently cites apocryphal books, and cites the Scripture by memory:" what have you gained toward the proof of your grand conclusion, that "he was either too great a fool, or too great a knave, to be believed touching a plain matter of fact?"

9. You seem sensible of this, and therefore add, fifthly, "It will be said, perhaps, that these instances shew a weakness of judgment, but do not touch the credit of Justin as a witness of fact," (p. 29.) But can you scrape up nothing from all the dunghills of antiquity that does? I dare say, you will do your utmost. And, first, you reply, "The want of judgment alone may, in some cases, disqualify a man from being a good witness. Thus Justin himself was imposed upon by those of Alexandria, who shewed him some old ruins under the name of cells.—And so he was by those who told him, there was a statue at Rome, inscribed *Simoni Deo Sancto*;" (p. 40,) "whereas

it was really inscribed, *Semoni Sanco Deo;* to an old deity of the Sabines." "Now," say you, "if he was deceived in such obvious facts, how much more easily would he be deceived by subtle and crafty impostors," (p. 41.) Far less easily. A man of good judgment may be deceived in the inscriptions of statues and points of ancient history. But if he has only eyes and ears, and a small degree of common sense, he cannot be deceived in facts where he is both an eye and ear witness.

16. For a parting blow, you endeavour to prove, sixthly, that Justin was a knave as well as a fool. To this end you remark, "That he charges the Jews with erasing three passages out of the Greek bible; one whereof stands there still, and the other two were not expunged by some Jew, but added by some Christian. Nay, that "able critic and divine, John Croius," (you know when to bestow honourable appellations,) "says, 'Justin forged and published this passage, for the confirmation of the Christian doctrine, as well as the greatest part of the Sybilline Oracles, and the sentences of Mercurius.'"

With far greater probability than John Croius asserts, that Justin forged these passages, a man of candour would hope that he read them in his copy (though incorrect) of the Greek Bible. And till you disprove this, or prove the assertion of Croius, you are got not a jot further still. But notwithstanding you have taken true pains to blacken him, both with regard to his morals and understanding, he may still be an honest man, and an unexceptionable witness, as to plain facts done before his face.

11. You fall upon Irenæus next, and carefully enumerate all the mistakes in his writings. As first, that he held the doctrine of the Millennium, and related a weak fancy of Papias concerning it. Secondly, that he believed our Saviour to have lived fifty years. Thirdly, that he believed Enoch and Elias were translated, and St. Paul caught up to that very Paradise from which Adam was expelled; (so he might, and *all the later fathers* with him, without being either the better or the worse.) Fourthly, that he believed

the story concerning the Septuagint Version: nay, and that the Scriptures were *destroyed* in the Babylonish captivity, but restored again after seventy years by Esdras, inspired for that purpose, (p. 44.) "In this also," (you say, but do not prove) "he was followed by all the principal fathers that succeeded him; although there is no better foundation for it, than that fabulous relation in the second book of Esdras." You add, fifthly, that he believed that the sons of God, who came in to the daughters of men, were evil angels. And all the early fathers, you are very ready to believe, "were drawn into the same errors, by the authority of the apocryphal book of Enoch, cited by St. Jude."

12. It is not only out of your good will to St. Jude, or Irenæus, you gather up these fragments of error, that nothing may be lost, but also to the whole body of the ancient Christians. "For all those absurdities," you say, "were taught by the fathers of those ages," (naturally implying, by all the fathers) "as doctrines of the universal church derived immediately from the apostles; and thought so necessary, that those who held the contrary, were hardly considered as real Christians." Here I must beg you to prove as well as assert, 1. That all these absurdities of the Millennium in the grossest sense of it, of the age of Christ, of paradise, of the destruction of the Scriptures, of the Septuagint Version, and of evil angels mixing with women, were taught by all the fathers of those ages; 2. That all those fathers taught these as doctrines of the universal church, derived immediately from the apostles; and, 3. That they all denied those to be real Christians, who held the contrary.

13. You next cite two far-fetched interpretations of Scripture, and a weak saying out of the writings of Irenæus. But all three prove no more, than that in these instances he did not speak with strictness of judgment: not that he was incapable of knowing what he saw with his own eyes, or of truly relating it to others.

Before we proceed to what, with equal good humour and impartiality, you remark concerning the rest of these fathers,

it will be proper to consider what more is *interspersed* concerning these "in the sequel of this argument."

14. And, first, you say, "Justin used an inconclusive argument for the existence of the souls of men after death," (p. 67.) It is possible he might, but whether it was conclusive or not, this does not affect his moral character.

You say, secondly, "It was the common opinion of all the fathers, taken from the authority of Justin Martyr, that the dæmons wanted the fumes of the sacrifices to strengthen them for the enjoyment of their lustful pleasures," (p. 69.)

Sir, no man of reason will believe this concerning one of the fathers upon your bare assertion. I must, therefore, desire you to prove by more than a scrap of a sentence, 1. That Justin himself held this opinion; 2. That he invented it; 3. That it was the common opinion of all the fathers; and, 4. That they all took it on his authority.

15. You affirm, thirdly, "He says, that all devils yield and submit to the name of Jesus: as also to the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," (p. 85.) Very likely he may.

Lastly, you cite a passage from him, concerning the Spirit of God influencing the minds of holy men. But neither does this in any measure affect his credit as a witness of fact. Consequently, after *all* that you "have been able to draw," either from himself, or "any of the primitive writers," here is one witness of unquestionable credit, touching the miracles wrought in the primitive church; touching the subsistence of the extraordinary gifts after the days of the apostles.

16. But let us come once more to Irenæus; for you have not done with him yet. "Forgery," you say, "has been actually charged upon Justin," (by John Croius and Dr. Middleton.) "and may with equal reason be charged on Irenæus. For what other account can be given of his frequent appeals to apostolical tradition, for the support of so many incredible doctrines?" (p. 111.) Why, this very natural one, that in non-essential points he too easily fol-

lowed the authority of Papias, a weak man, who, on slight grounds, believed many trifling things to have been said or done by the apostles. And, allowing all this, yet it does not give us so "lamentable an idea of those primitive ages and primitive champions of the Christian cause," (p. 59.)

The same account may be given of his mistake, concerning the age of our Lord, (ibid.) There is therefore as yet neither reason nor any plausible pretence for laying forgery to his charge. And, consequently, thus far his credit, as a witness, stands clear and unimpeached.

But you say, secondly, "He was a zealous asserter of tradition," (p. 61.) He might be so, and yet might be an honest man: and that, whether he was mistaken or not, in supposing Papias to have been a disciple of John the apostle," (p. 64.)

You say, thirdly, he supposed, "that the disciples of Simon Magus, as well as of Carpocrates, used magical arts;" (p. 68.) "that the dead were frequently raised in his time;" (p. 72.) "that the Jews, by the name of God, cast out devils:" and "that many had even then the gift of tongues, although he had it not himself," (p. 85.) This is the whole of your charge against Irenæus, when summed up and laid together. And now let any reasonable person judge, whether all this gives us the least cause to question, either his having sense enough to discern a plain matter of fact, or honesty enough to relate it. Here then is one more credible witness of miraculous gifts after the days of the apostles.

18. What you advance concerning the history of tradition, I am neither concerned to defend nor to confute. Only I must observe, you forget yourself again where you say, "the fable of the Millennium, of the old age of Christ, with many more, were all embraced by the earliest fathers," (p. 64.) For modesty's sake, Sir, think a little before you speak, and remember you yourself informed us, that one of these was never embraced at all, but by one single father only.

19. "I cannot," you say, "dismiss this article, without taking notice, that witchcraft was universally believed through all ages of the primitive church," (p. 66.) This you shew by citations from several of the fathers: who likewise believed, as you inform us, that "evil spirits had power frequently to afflict either the bodies or minds of men: that they acted the parts of the Heathen gods, and assumed the forms of those who were called from the dead. Now this opinion," say you, "is not only a proof of the grossest credulity, but of that species of it, which, of all others, lays a man most open to imposture," (p. 70.)

And yet this opinion, as you know full well, has its foundation not only in the histories of all ages, and all nations throughout the habitable world, even where Christianity never obtained: but particularly in Scripture: in abundance of passages both of the Old and New Testament: as where the Israelites were expressly commanded not to 'suffer a witch to live,' Exod. xxii. 18: where St. Paul numbers *witchcraft* with 'the works of the flesh,' and ranks it with adultery and idolatry, Gal. v. 19, 20.: and where St. John declares, 'without, are sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers,' Rev. xxii. 15.

That 'the gods of the Heathens are devils,' is declared in terms, by one of those who are styled inspired writers, 1 Cor. x. 20. And many conceive that another of them gives us a plain instance of their 'assuming the form of those who were called from the dead,' 1 Sam. xxviii. 13, 14.

Of the power of the evil spirits to afflict the minds of men, none can doubt who believe there are any such beings. And of their power to afflict the body we have abundant proof both in the history of Job, and that of the gospel demoniacs. I do not mean, Sir, to accuse *you* of believing these things: you have shewn, that you are guiltless in this matter; and that you pay no more regard to that antiquated book, the Bible, than you do to the second book of Esdras. But, alas! The fathers were not so far enlightened. And because they were bigotted to that old

Book, they, of consequence, held for truth, what you assure us was mere delusion and imposture.

20. Now to apply. "A mind," you say, "so totally possessed by superstitious fancies, could not even suspect the pretensions of those vagrant jugglers, who in those primitive ages were so numerous and so industriously employed, in deluding their fellow creatures. Both Heathens, Jews, and Christians, are all allowed to have had such impostors among them," (p. 71.) By whom, Sir, is this allowed of the Christians? By whom, but Celsus, was it ever affirmed of them? Who informed you of their growing so *numerous?* And using such *industry* in their employment? To speak the plain truth, your *mind* appears to be *so totally possessed by* these *vagrant jugglers*, that you cannot say one word about the primitive church, but they immediately start up before you; though there is no more proof of their ever existing, than of a witch's sailing in an egg-shell.

21. You conclude this head: "When pious Christians are arrived to this pitch of credulity, as to believe that evil spirits, or evil men can work miracles in opposition to the gospel; their very piety will oblige them to admit as miraculous, whatever is pretended to be wrought in defence of it," (p. 71.) Once more you have spoken out: you have shewn without disguise, what you think of St. Paul, and the *lying miracles*, 2 Thess. ii. 9, which he (poor man!) believed evil spirits or evil men could work in opposition to the gospel: and of St. John, talking so idly of him who 'doeth great wonders, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth,' (even though they were not Christians) 'by means of those miracles which he hath power to do.' Rev. xiii. 13, 14.

22. You have now finished the third thing you proposed, which was, "To shew the particular characters of the several fathers, who attest," that they were eye and ear-witnesses of the extraordinary gifts in the primitive church. You named nine of these, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, Origen,

Cyprian, Arnobius, and Lanctantius; at the same time observing, that many other writers attest the same thing. But let the others stand by. Are these good men and true? That is the present question.

You say, No. And to prove that these *nine* are knaves, bring several charges against *two* of them. These have been answered at large; some of them proved to be false; some, though true, yet not invalidating their evidence.

But supposing we wave the evidence of these two, here are seven more still to come. Oh! but you say, "If there were twice seven, they only repeat the words which those have taught them."

You say, But how often must you be reminded, that saying and proving are two things? I grant, in three or four opinions, some (though not all) of these were mistaken as well as those two. But this by no means proves, that they were all knaves together; or that if Justin Martyr or Irenæus speaks wrong, I am therefore to give no credit to the evidence of Theophilus or Minutius Felix.

23. You have, therefore, made a more lame piece of work on this head, (if possible) than on the preceding. You have promised great things, and performed just nothing. You have left above three parts in four of your work entirely untouched; as these two are not a fourth part even of the writers you have named, as attesting the continuance of the *extraordinary gifts* after the age of the apostles.

But you have taught that trick at least to your *vagrant jugglers*, to supply the defect of all other arguments. At every dead lift you are sure to play upon us these dear creatures of your own imagination. They are the very strength of your battle, the tenth legion. Yet if a man impertinently calls for proof of their existence, if he comes close and engages them hand to hand, they immediately vanish away.

IV. You are, in the fourth place, to "review all the several kinds of miraculous gifts which are pretended to

have been given; and to observe from the nature of each, how far they may reasonably be suspected." p. 72.

"These," you say, "are, 1. The power of raising the dead; 2. Of healing the sick; 3. Of casting out devils; 4. Of prophesying; 5. Of seeing visions; 6. Of discovering the secrets of men; 7. Of expounding the Scriptures; 8. Of speaking with tongues."

I had rather have had "an account of the miraculous powers as they are represented to us in the history of the gospel." But that account you are not inclined to give. So we will make the best of what we have.

Sect. I. 1. And, first, As to "raising the dead. Irenæus affirms, 'This was frequently performed on very necessary occasions; when by great fastings and the joint supplication of the church, the spirit of the dead person returned into him, and the man was given back to the prayers of the saints.'"

2. But you object, "There is not an instance of this to be found in the three first centuries." (p. 72.) I presume you mean, no Heathen historian has mentioned it, (for Christian historians were not.) I answer, 1. It is not probable a Heathen historian would have related such a fact, had he known it. 2. It is equally improbable, he should know it: seeing the Christians knew with whom they had to do: and that, had such an instance been made public, they would not long have enjoyed him who had been given back to their prayers. They could not but remember what had been before; when the Jews sought Lazarus also to kill him: a very obvious reason why a miracle of this particular kind, ought not to have been published abroad: especially, considering, 3. That it was not designed for the conversion of the Heathens; but on occasions necessary for the good of the Church, of the Christian community: Lastly, It was a miracle proper above all others, to support and confirm the Christians, who were daily tortured and slain, but sustained by the hope of obtaining a better resurrection.

3. You object, secondly, "The Heathens constantly

affirmed the thing itself to be impossible." (p. 73.) They did so. But is it a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

4. You object, thirdly, "That when Autolycus, an eminent Heathen, scarcely forty years after this, said to Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, 'Shew me but one raised from the dead, that I may see and believe;' Theophilus could not." (ibid.) Supposing he could not, I do not see that this contradicts the testimony of Irenæus; for he does not affirm, (though you say, (p. 72,) he does) that this was "performed, as it were, in every parish, or place where there was a Christian church." He does not affirm, that it was performed at Antioch: probably, not in any church, unless where a concurrence of important circumstances required it. Much less does he affirm, that the persons raised in France, would be alive forty years after. Therefore, although it be granted, 1. That the historians of that age are silent; 2. That the Heathens said, the thing was impossible; 3. That Theophilus did not answer the challenge of the Heathen Autolycus: all this will not invalidate in any degree, the express testimony of Irenæus, or prove, that none had been raised from the dead, since the days of the apostles.

Sect. II. 1. "The next gift is, that of healing the sick; often performed by anointing them with oil: in favour of which," as you observe, "the ancient testimonies are more full and express." (p. 75.) But "this," you say, "might be accounted for without a miracle, by the natural efficacy of the oil itself." (p. 76.) I doubt, not. Be pleased to try, how many you can cure thus, that are blind, deaf, dumb, or paralytic: and experience, if not philosophy, will teach you, that oil has no such natural efficacy as this.

2. Of this you seem not insensible already, and therefore fly away to your favourite supposition, that "they were not cured at all: that the whole matter was a cheat from the beginning to the end." But by what arguments do you evince this? The first is, "The Heathens pretended to do

the same. Nay, and managed the imposture with so much art, that the Christians could neither deny nor detect it: but insisted always, that it was performed by demons, or evil spirits." (p. 76.) But still the Heathens maintained, "The cures were wrought by their gods, by Æsculapius in particular." And where is the difference? Seeing, as was observed before, the gods of the Heathens were but devils.

3. But, you say, "Although public monuments were erected in proof and memory of these cures, at the time when they were performed, yet it is certain all those Heathen miracles were pure forgeries." (p. 79.) How is it certain? If you can swallow this without good proof, you are far more credulous than I. I cannot believe, that the whole body of the Heathens, for so many generations, were utterly destitute of common sense, any more than of common honesty. Why should you fix such a charge on whole cities and countries? You could have done no more, if they had been Christians!

4. But "diseases thought fatal and desperate, are oft surprisingly healed of themselves. And, therefore, we cannot pay any great regard to such stories, unless we knew more precisely in this case the real bounds between nature and miracle." (p. 79.) Sir, I understand you well. The drift of the argument is easily seen. It points at the Master as well as his servants: and tends to prove, that after all this talk about miraculous cures, we are not sure, there were ever any in the world. But it will do no harm. For although we grant, 1. That some recover, even in seemingly desperate cases, and, 2. That we do not know in any case, the precise bounds between nature and miracle; yet it does not follow, therefore, I cannot be assured, there ever was a miracle of healing in the world. To explain this by instance. I do not precisely know how far nature may go, in healing, that is, in restoring sight to the blind. Yet this I assuredly know, that if a man born blind, is restored to sight by a word, this is not nature, but miracle.

And to such a story, well attested, all reasonable men will pay the highest regard.

5. The sum of what you have advanced on this head, is, 1. That the Heathens themselves had miraculous cures among them; 2. That oil may cure some diseases, by its natural efficacy; and, 3. That we do not know the precise bounds of nature. All this I allow. But all this will not prove that no miraculous cures were performed, either by our Lord and his apostles, or by those who lived in the three succeeding centuries.

Sect. III. 1. The third of the miraculous powers said to have been in the primitive church, is that of casting out devils. The testimonies concerning this are out of number, and as plain as words can make them. To shew, therefore, that all these signify nothing, and that there were never any devils cast out at all, (neither by the apostles, nor since the apostles, for the argument proves both or neither,) is a task worthy of you. And (to give you your just praise) you have here put forth all your strength.

2. And yet I cannot but apprehend, there was a much shorter way. Would it not have been readier to overthrow all those testimonies at a stroke, by proving, there never was any devil in the world? Then the whole affair of casting him out had been at an end.

But it is in condescension to the weakness and prejudices of mankind, that you go less out of the common road, and only observe, "That those who were said to be possessed of the devil, may have been ill of the falling sickness." "And their symptoms," you say, "seem to be nothing else but the ordinary symptoms of an epilepsy." p. 81.

If it be asked, but were "the speeches and confessions of the devils, and their answering to all questions, nothing but the ordinary symptoms of an epilepsy?" You take in a second hypothesis, and account for these "by the arts of imposture and contrivance, between the persons concerned in the act." p. 82.

But is not this something extraordinary, that men in

epileptic fits, should be capable of so much art and contrivance? To get over this difficulty, we are to suppose that art and contrivance were the main ingredients: so that we are to add only *quantum sufficet* of the epilepsy, and sometimes to leave it out of the composition.

But the proof, Sir, where is the proof? I want a little of that too. Instead of this we have only another supposition, "That all the fathers were either induced by their prejudices, to give too hasty credit to these pretended possessions, or carried away by their zeal to support a delusion, which was useful to the Christian cause." p. 81.

I grant they were prejudiced in favour of the Bible. But yet we cannot fairly conclude from hence, either that they were one and all continually deceived by merely pretended possessions: or, that they would all lie for God, a thing absolutely forbidden in that book.

3. But "leaders of sects," you say, "whatever principles they pretend to, have seldom scrupled to use a commodious lie." (p. 83.) I observe, you are quite impartial here. You make no exception of age or nation: It is all one to you, whether your reader applies this to the son of Abdalla, or the son of Mary. And yet, Sir, I cannot but think there was a difference. I fancy the Jew was an honester man than the Arabian: and though Mahomet used many a *commodious lie*, yet Jesus of Nazareth did not.

4. However, "Not one of these fathers made any scruple of using the hyperbolical style," (that is, in plain English, of lying) "as an eminent writer of ecclesiastical history declares." (ibid.) You should have said an impartial writer. For who would scruple that character to Mr. Le Clerc? And yet I cannot take either his or your bare word for this. Be pleased to produce a little proof. Hitherto you have proved absolutely nothing on the head, but (as your manner is) taken all for granted.

5. You next relate that famous story taken from Tertullian. "A woman went to the theatre, and returned possessed with a devil. When the unclean spirit was asked,

how he dared to assault a Christian? He answered, I found her on my own ground." (p. 83.) After relating another, (which you endeavour to account for naturally,) you intimate, that this was a mere lie of Tertullian's. But how is that proved? Why, "Tertullian was an utter enemy to plays and public shows in the theatre." He was so. But can we infer from thence, that he was an utter enemy to common honesty?

6. You add, "The fathers themselves own, that even the Jews, yea and the Heathens, cast out devils." (p. 84.) "Now it will be granted, that these Jewish and Heathen exorcists were mere cheats and impostors. But the fathers believed, they really cast them out. Now if they could take their tricks for the effects of a supernatural power, well might they be deceived by their own impostors. Or, they might think it convenient to oppose one cheat to another." (p. 87, 88.)

"Deceived," say you, "by their impostors?" Why I thought they were the very men who set them to work! Who opposed one cheat to another. Apt scholars, who acted their part so well, as even to deceive their masters! But whatever the Heathen were, we cannot grant, that all the "Jewish exorcists were impostors." Whether the Heathens cast out devils or not, it is sure the *sons* of the *Jews cast them out*. I mean, upon supposition, that Jesus of Nazareth cast them out: which is a point not here to be disputed.

7. But "it is very hard to believe what Origen declares, that the devils used to possess and destroy cattle." You might have said, what Matthew and Mark declare, concerning the herd of swine. And yet we shall find you by and by believing far harder things than this.

Before you subjoined the silly story of Hilarian and his camel, you should, in candour, have informed your reader, that it is disputed, whether the life of Hilarian was written by St. Jerom or not! But be it as it may, I have no concern with either. For they did not live within the three first ages.

8. I know not what you have *proved* hitherto, though you have *affirmed* many things, and *intimated* more. But now we come to the strength of the cause, contained in your five observations.

You observe, first, "That all the primitive accounts of casting out devils, though given by different fathers, and in different ages, yet exactly agree with regard to all the main circumstances." (p. 92.) And this you apprehend to be a mark of imposture. "It looks," you say, "as if they copied from each other!" Now a vulgar reader would have imagined, that any single account of this kind must be rendered much more (not less) credible, by parallel accounts of what many had severally seen, at different times, and in different places.

9. You observe, secondly, "That the persons thus possessed, were called, Εγγαστριμύθοι, ventriloquists;" (some of them were) "because they were generally believed to speak out of the belly." (ibid.) "Now there are at this day," you say, "those who by art and practice can speak in the same manner. If we suppose then that there were artists of this kind among the ancient Christians, how easily, by a correspondence between the ventriloquist and the exorcist, might they delude the most sensible of their audience?"

But what did the *ventriloquist* do with his *epilepsy* in the mean time? You must not let it go. Because many of the circumstances wherein all these accounts agree, cannot be tolerably accounted for without it. And yet how will you make these two agree? It is a point worthy your serious consideration.

But cheats doubtless they were, account for it who can. Yet it is strange, none of the Heathen should find them out: that the imposture should remain quite undiscovered till fourteen hundred years after the impostors were dead! He must have a very large faith, who can believe this: who can suppose, that not one of all those impostors, should either through inadvertence, or in the midst of tortures and death, have once intimated any such thing.

10. You observe, thirdly, "That many demoniacs could not be cured by all the power of the exorcists, and that the cures which were pretended to be wrought on any, were but temporary; were but the cessation of a particular fit, or access of the distemper. This," you say, "is evident from the testimony of antiquity itself, and may be clearly collected from the method of treating them in the ancient church," p. 92.

Sir, you are the most obliging disputant in the world: for you continually answer your own arguments. Your last observation confuted all that you had advanced before. And now you are so kind as to confute that. For if, after all, these demoniacs were real epileptics, and that in so high a degree as to be wholly incurable, what becomes of their art and practice? And of the very good correspondence between the ventriloquist and the exorcist?

Having allowed you your supposition just so long, as may suffice to confute yourself, I must now observe, it is not true. For all that "is evident from the testimony of antiquity" is this: that although many demoniacs were wholly delivered, yet some were not, particularly in the third century: but continued months or years, with only intervals of ease, before they were entirely set at liberty.

11. You observe, fourthly, "That great numbers of demoniacs subsisted in those early ages, whose chief habitation was in a part of the church, where, as in a kind of hospital, they were under the care of the exorcists," (p. 94.) "Which will account for the confidence of those challenges made to the Heathens by the Christians, to come and see how they could drive the devils out of them, while they kept such numbers of them in constant pay: always ready for the show; tried and disciplined by your exorcists to groan and howl, and give proper answers to all questions," p. 95.

So now "the correspondence between the ventriloquist and the exorcist" is grown more close than ever! But the misfortune is, this observation likewise wholly overthrows

that which went before it. For if all the groaning, and howling, and other symptoms, were no more than what they "were disciplined to by their exorcists," (p. 95;) then it cannot be, that "many of them could not possibly be cured by all the power of those exorcists," (p. 92.) What! could they not possibly be taught to know their masters? And to what end as well as when to begin the show? One would think, that the cures wrought upon these might have been more than temporary. Nay, it is surprising, that while they had such numbers of them, they should ever suffer the same person to shew twice.

12. You observe, fifthly, "That whereas this power of casting out devils, had hitherto been in the hands only of the meaner part of the laity, (that wants proof) it was, about the year 367, put under the direction of the clergy; it being then decreed by the council of Laodicea, that none should be exorcists but those appointed (or ordained) by the bishop. But no sooner was this done, even by those who favoured and desired to support it, than the gift itself gradually decreased and expired," p. 95.

You here overthrow not only your immediately preceding observation (as usual) but likewise what you have observed elsewhere, "That the exorcists began to be ordained about the middle of the third century." If so, what need of decreeing it now, above a hundred years after? Again, if the exorcists were ordained a hundred years before this council sat, what change was made by the decree of the council? Or how came the power of casting out devils to cease upon it? You say, the bishops "still favoured and desired to support it." Why then did they not support it? It must have been they (not the poor exorcists, who were but a degree above sextons) who had hitherto "kept such numbers of them in pay." What was become of them now? Were all the groaners and howlers dead? And no more to be procured for money? Or rather, did not the bishops, think you, grow covetous as they grew rich, and so kept fewer and fewer of them in pay, till at length the whole business dropped?

13. These are your laboured objections against the great promise of our Lord, *In my name shall they cast out devils:* whereby (to make sure work) you strike at him and his apostles, just as much as at the primitive Fathers. But by a strange jumble of ideas in your head, you would prove so much that you prove nothing. By attempting to shew, all who claimed this power to be at once both fools and knaves, you have spoiled your whole cause, and, in the event, neither shewn them to be one nor the other: as the one half of your argument all along just serves to overthrow the other. So that after all, the ancient testimonies touching this gift, remain firm and unshaken.

Sect. IV. 1. You told us above, That "the fourth miraculous gift was that of prophesying," the fifth of "seeing visions," the sixth of "discovering the secrets of men," (p. 72.) But here you jumble them all together, telling us, "The next miraculous gift is that of prophetic visions, and ecstatic trances," (*ecstatic ecstacies* you might have said,) "and the discovery of men's hearts," (p. 96.) But why do you thrust all three into one? Because, you say, these seem to be the fruit of one spirit." Most certainly they are, whether it was the spirit of truth, or (as you suppose) the spirit of delusion.

2. However, it is the second of these on which you chiefly dwell, (the fifth of those you before enumerated,) taking but little notice of the fourth, "foretelling things to come," and none at all of the sixth, "discovering the secrets of men." The testimonies therefore for these remain in full force, as you do not even attempt to invalidate them. With regard to "visions or ecstacies," you observe, first, That Tertullian calls *ecstacy*, "a temporary loss of senses," (p. 97.) It was so, of the outward senses, which were then locked up. You observe, secondly, That "Suidas" (a very primitive writer, who lived between eight and nine hundred years after Tertullian!) "says, That of all the kinds of madness, that of the poets and prophets was alone to be wished for." I am at a loss to know what this is brought to prove. The question is, were there visions in

the primitive church? You observe, thirdly, that Philo the Jew says, (I literally translate his words, which you do not, for it would not answer your purpose,) "When divine light shines, the human sets; but when that sets, this rises. This uses to befall the prophets," (p. 98.) Well, Sir, and what is this to the question? Why, "from these testimonies," you say, "we may collect, that the vision or ecstacy of the primitive church was of the same kind with that of the Delphic Pythia, or the Cumæan Sibyl."

Well collected indeed! But I desire a little better testimony, than either that of Philo the Jew, or Suidas, a lexicographer of the eleventh century, before I believe this. How little Tertullian is to be regarded on this head, you yourself shew in the very next page.

3. You say, fourthly, "Montanus and his associates were the authors of these trances. They first raised this spirit of enthusiasm in the church, and acquired great credit by their visions and ecstacies." Sir, you forget; they did not *raise this spirit*, but rather Joel and St. Peter; according to whose words, the *young men saw visions*, before Montanus was born.

You observe, fifthly, How Tertullian was "imposed upon by the ecstatic craft of visionaries," (p. 99,) and then fall upon Cyprian with all your might: your objections to whom we shall now consider.

And, first, you lay it down as a postulatum, that he was "fond of power and episcopal authority." I cannot grant this, Sir. I must have some proof; else this, and all you infer from it, will go for nothing.

You say, secondly, "In all questionable points of doctrine or discipline, which he had a mind to introduce into the Christian worship, we find him constantly appealing to the testimony of visions and divine revelations. Thus he says to Cœcilius, that he was divinely admonished to mix water with wine in the sacrament, in order to render it effectual."

You set out unhappily enough. For this can never be a proof of Cyprian's appealing to visions and revelations

in order to "introduce questionable points" of doctrine or discipline "into the Christian worship:" because this point was unquestionable, and could not then be "introduced into the Christian worship," having had a constant place therein, as you yourself have shewed, (Introd. Disc. p. 57,) at least from the time of Justin Martyr. Indeed, neither Justin nor Cyprian use those words, *In order to render it effectual.* They are an ingenious and honest addition of your own, in order to make something out of nothing.

5. I observe you take much the same liberty in your next quotation from Cyprian. "He threatens," you say, "to execute, 'what he was ordered to do against them in a vision,'" (p. 102.) Here also the last words, *in a vision*, are an improvement upon the text. Cyprian's words are, *I will use that admonition which the Lord commands me to use.** But neither was this in order to introduce any "questionable point," either of doctrine or discipline; no more than his "using the same threat to Pupianus," who had spoken ill of him and left his communion.

6. You go on, "He says likewise, he was admonished of God, to ordain one Numidicus, a confessor," (p. 103,) "who had been left for dead, half burnt, and buried in stones," (p. 104.) True, but what "questionable point of doctrine" or discipline did he introduce hereby? Or by ordaining Celerinus: "who was over-ruled and compelled by a divine vision to accept that office." So you affirm Cyprian says. But Cyprian says it not; at least, not in those words which you cite in the margin; which literally translated, run thus, *I recommend to you Celerinus, joined to our clergy, not by human suffrage, but by the divine favour.*†

"In another letter, speaking of Aurelius, whom he had ordained a reader, he says to his clergy and people, 'In ordaining clergy, my dearest brethren, I use to consult you

* Utar ea admonitione, qua me Dominus uti jubet. Epist. 9.

† Non humana suffragatione, sed divina dignatione, conjunctum. Epist. 34.

first—But there is no need to wait for human testimonies, when the divine suffrage has been already signified."

An impartial man would wonder what you could infer from these five passages put together. Why, by the help of a short postulatum, "He was fond of power," (you have as much ground to say, *He was fond of bloodshed;*) you will make it plain, "This was all a trick to enlarge his episcopal authority." But as that postulatum is not allowed, you have all your work to begin again.

7. Hitherto then the character of Cyprian is unhurt; but now you are resolved to blow it up at once. So you proceed, "The most memorable effect of any of his visions, was his flight from his church in the time of persecution," (p. 104.) "He affirms, that he was commanded to retire by a special revelation from heaven. Yet this plea was a mere fiction, contrived to quiet the scandal which was raised by his flight: and is confuted by himself, where he declares, it was the advice of Tertullus which prevailed with him to withdraw," p. 105.

You here charge Cyprian with "confuting himself," in saying, "He withdrew by the advice of Tertullus;" whereas he "before affirmed, that he was commanded to retire by a special revelation from heaven." Indeed he had not: there is no necessity at all for putting this construction upon those words, "The Lord who commanded me to retire;" which may without any force be understood of the written command, 'When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another,' (Matt. x. 23.) It is not therefore clear, that this plea of "special revelation" was ever advanced. And if it was advanced, it still remains to be proved, that "it was nothing else but a mere fiction."

8. Your citing his editor here, obliges me to add a remark, for which you give continual occasion. If either Rigalt, Mr. Dodwell, Dr. Grabe, Mr. Thirlby, or any editor of any of the Fathers, ever drops an expression to the disadvantage of the author whom he publishes or illustrates, this you account so much treasure, and will surely find a time to expose it to public view. And all these passages

you recite as demonstration. These are doubtless mere oracles: although when the same person speaks in favour of the Father, his authority is not worth a straw. But you have "none of those arts which are commonly employed by disputants to palliate a bad cause!" Pref. p. 31.

9. What you relate of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, you have not from himself, but only from one who lived nearly a hundred years after Dionysius was dead. Therefore he is not at all accountable for it: as neither am I for any vision of St. Jerome. But I am concerned in the consequence you draw from it: "if this was a fiction, so were Cyprian's too." That will not follow. Many objections may lie against the one, which have no place with regard to the other.

10. You now bring forth your grand discovery, that "all the visions" of those days "were contrived, or authorised at least, by the leading men of the church. For they were all applied, either, 1. To excuse the conduct of particular persons, in some instances of it liable to censure; or, 2. To enforce some doctrine or discipline pressed by some, but not relished by others; or, 3. To confirm things not only frivolous, but sometimes even superstitious and hurtful," (p. 109.) Well, Sir, here is the proposition. But where is the proof? I hope we shall have it in your next *Free Inquiry*: and that you will then give us a few instances of such applications, from the writers of the three first centuries.

11. Being not disposed to do this at present, you fall again upon the poor "heretic Montanus: who first gave a vogue" (as you phrase it) "to visions and ecstacies in the Christian church," (p. 110.) So you told us before. But we cannot believe it yet; because Peter and Paul tell us the contrary.

Indeed you do not now mention Montanus, because it is any thing to the question, but only to make way for "observing," that those who wrote against him, "employed such arguments against his prophecy, as shake the credit of all prophecy. For Epiphanus makes this the very criterion

between a true and a false prophet, 'That the true had no ecstacies, constantly retained his senses, and with firmness of mind apprehended and uttered the divine oracles." Sir, have you not mistook? Have you not transcribed one sentence in the margin, and translated another? That sentence which stands in your margin is this, "When there was need, the saints of God among the prophets prophesied all things with the true spirit, and with a sound understanding and reasonable mind." Now it is difficult to find out how this comes to "shake the credit of all prophecy."

12. Why thus, "Before the Montanists had brought those ecstacies into disgrace, the prophecy of the orthodox too was exerted in ecstacy. And so were the prophecies of the Old Testament, according to the current opinion of earlier days," p. 111.

That this was then the "current opinion," you bring three citations to prove. But if you could cite three Fathers more during the three first centuries, "expressly affirming," that the prophets were all out of their senses, I would not take their word. For though I take most of the Fathers to have been wise and good men, yet I know none of them were infallible. But do even these three affirm it? No: not one of them, at least in the words you have cited. From Athenagoras you cite only part of a sentence, which translated as literally as it will well bear, runs thus, "Who in an ecstacy of their own thoughts, being moved by the divine Spirit, spoke the things with which they were inspired, even as a piper breathes into a pipe." Does Athenagoras "expressly affirm" in these words, that the prophets were "transported out of their senses?" I hope, Sir, you do not understand Greek. If so, you shew here only a little harmless ignorance.

13. From Justin Martyr also you cite but part of a sentence. He speaks (very nearly) thus: "That the Spirit of God descending from heaven, and using righteous men, as the quill strikes the harp or lyre, may reveal unto us the knowledge of divine and heavenly things." And does

Justin *expressly affirm* in these words, that all the prophets were "transported out of their senses?"

Tertullian's words are, "A man being in the spirit, especially when he beholds the glory of God, must needs lose sense."* Now as it is not plain, that he means hereby lose his understanding, (it being at least equally probable, that he intends no more than losing, for the time, the use of his outward senses,) neither can it be said, that Tertullian expressly affirms, "The prophets were all out of their senses." Therefore you have not so much as one Father to vouch for what you say was "the current opinion in those days."

14. I doubt not but all men of learning will observe a circumstance, which holds throughout all your quotations. The strength of your argument constantly lies in a loose and paraphrastical manner of translating. The strength of mine lies in translating all in the most close and literal manner; so that closeness of translation strengthens mine in the same proportion as it weakens your arguments: a plain proof of what you elsewhere observe, that you use "no subtle refinements or forced constructions!" pref. p. 32.

15. But to return to Cyprian. "I cannot forbear," you say, "relating two or three more of his wonderful stories," (p. 112.) "The first is, A man who had denied Christ, was presently struck dumb: the second, A woman who had done so, was seized by an unclean spirit, and soon after died in great anguish: the third, of which he says he was an eye-witness, is this: the Heathen magistrates gave to a Christian infant, part of what had been offered to an idol. When the deacon forced the consecrated wine on this child, it was immediately seized with convulsions and vomitting: as was a woman who had apostatized, upon taking the consecrated elements," (p. 113.) The other two relations Cyprian does not affirm of his own personal knowledge. p. 115.

"Now what can we think," say you, "of these strange stories, but that they were partly forged, partly dressed up

* Necesse est, excidat sensu.

in this tragical form, to support the discipline of the church, in these times of danger and trial?" p. 115.

Why, many will think, that some of them are true, even in the manner they are related: and that if any of them are not, Cyprian thought they were, and related them in the sincerity of his heart. Nay, perhaps some will think, that the wisdom of God might, "in those times of danger and trial," work things of this kind, for that very end, "to support the discipline of the church." And till you shew the falsehood, or at least the improbability of this, Cyprian's character stands untainted: not only as a man of sense, (which you yourself allow,) but likewise of eminent integrity: and consequently, it is beyond dispute, that *visions*, the fifth miraculous gift, remained in the church after the days of the apostles.

Sect. V. 1. The sixth of the miraculous gifts which you enumerated above, namely, *the discernment of spirits*, you just name, and then entirely pass over. The seventh is, that of *expounding the Scriptures*. You tack to it, "or the mysteries of God," (p. 116.) But inasmuch as it is not yet agreed (as it was intimated above) whether this be the same gift, it may just as well be left out.

2. Now as to this, you say, "There is no trace of it to be found, since the days of the apostles. For even in the second and third centuries, a most senseless and extravagant method of expounding them prevailed. For which, when we censure any particular father, his apologists with one voice allege, 'This is to be charged to the age wherein he lived, which could not relish or endure any better."

I doubt much, whether you can produce one single apologist for any "ridiculous comment on sacred writ," who any where "alleges, that the second or third century could not relish or endure any better." But if they were all to say this with one voice, yet no reasonable man could believe them. For it is notoriously contrary to matter of fact. It may be allowed, that some of these fathers, being afraid of too literal a way of expounding the Scriptures, leaned sometimes to the other extreme. Yet nothing can

be more unjust than to infer from hence, "That the age in which they lived, could not relish or endure any but senseless, extravagant, enthusiastic, ridiculous comments on sacred writ."

Will you say, that all the comments on Scripture, still to be found, in the writings of Ignatius, Polycarp, Athenagoras, or even of Origen and Clemens Alexandrinus, are senseless and extravagant? If not, this charge must fall to the ground: it being manifest, that even "the age in which they lived," could both "endure and relish," sound, sensible, rational (and yet spiritual) comments on holy writ. Yet this extravagant charge you have repeated over and over in various parts of your work: thrusting it upon your reader in season and out of season. How fairly, let all candid men judge.

3. Touching the miraculous gift of expounding Scripture you say, "Justin Martyr affirms, it was conferred on him by the special grace of God," (p. 117.) I cannot find, where he affirms this. Not in the words you cite, which literally translated (as was observed before) run thus: 'He hath revealed to us whatsoever things we have understood by his grace from the Scriptures also.' You seem conscious, these words do not prove the point, and therefore eke them out with those of Monsieur Tillemont. But his own words, and no other, will satisfy me. I cannot believe it, unless from his own mouth.

4. Meantime I cannot but observe an odd circumstance, that you are here, in the abundance of your strength, confuting a proposition which (whether it be true or false) not one of your antagonists affirms. You are labouring to prove, "There was not in the primitive church any such miraculous gift as that of expounding the Scriptures." Pray, Sir, who says there was? Not Justin Martyr: not one among all those fathers, whom you have quoted as witnesses of the miraculous gifts, from the tenth to the eighteenth page of your inquiry. If you think they do, I am ready to follow you, step by step, through every quotation you have made.

5. No, nor is this mentioned in any enumeration of the

miraculous gifts which I can find in the holy Scriptures. Prophecy indeed is mentioned more than once, by the Apostles as well as the Fathers. But the context shews, where it is promised as a miraculous gift, it means the foretelling things to come. All therefore which you say on this head, is a mere *ignoratio elenchi*, a mistake of the question to be proved.

Sect. VI. 1. The eigthth and last of the miraculous gifts you enumerated, was, the gift of tongues. (p. 119.) And this, it is sure, was claimed by the primitive Christians; for Iræneus says expressly, 'We hear many in the church, speaking with all kinds of tongues.' "And yet," you say, "this was granted only on certain special occasions, and then withdrawn again from the apostles themselves: so that in the ordinary course of their ministry they were generally destitute of it. This," you say, "I have shewn elsewhere." I presume, in some treatise which I have not seen.

2. But Iræneus, who declares, that "many had this gift in his days, yet owns, he had it not himself." This is only a proof that the case was then the same, as when St. Paul observed long before, *Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues?* (1 Cor. xii. 29, 30.) No, not even when those gifts were shed abroad in the most abundant manner.

3. "But no other father has made the least claim to it," (p. 120.) Perhaps none of those whose writings are now extant; at least, not in those writings which are extant. But what are these in comparison of those which are lost? And how many were burning and shining lights, within three hundred years after Christ, who wrote no account of themselves at all; at least none which has come to our hands! But who are they that "speak of it as a gift peculiar to the time of the apostles?" (ibid.) You say, "There is not a single father, who ventures to speak of it in any other manner." Well, bring but six Ante-nicene fathers, who speak of it in this manner, and I will give up the whole point.

4. But you say, "After the apostolic times, there is not in all history one instance, even so much as mentioned, of any particular person who ever exercised this gift," (p. 120.) You must mean, either that the Heathens have mentioned no instance of this kind, (which is not at all surprising,) or that Iræneus does not mention the names of those many persons who in his time exercised this gift. And this also may be allowed without affecting in any wise the credibility of his testimony concerning them.

5. I must take notice here of another of your postulatums, which leads you into many mistakes. With regard to past ages, you continually take this for granted, "What is not recorded, was not done." But this is by no means a self-evident axiom. Nay, possibly it is not true. For there may be many reasons in the depth of the wisdom of God, for his doing many things at various times and places, either by his natural or supernatural power, which were never recorded at all. And abundantly more were recorded once, and that with the fullest evidence, whereof nevertheless we find no certain evidence now, at the distance of fourteen hundred years.

6. Perhaps this may obtain in the very case before us. Many may have spoken with new tongues, of whom this is not recorded: at least the records are lost, in a course of so many hundreds of years. Nay, it is not only possible that it may be so, but it it absolutely certain that it is so. And you yourself must acknowledge it. For you acknowledge, that the apostles, when in strange countries, spoke with strange tongues: that St. John, for instance, when in Asia Minor, St. Peter, when in Italy, (if he was really there,) and the other apostles, when in other countries, in Parthia, Media, Phrygia, Pamphylia, spoke each to the natives of each in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God. And yet there is no authentic record of this: "There is not in all history, one well-attested instance of any particular apostle's exercising this gift in any country whatsoever." Now, Sir, if your axiom were allowed, what would be the conse-

quence? Even that the apostles themselves no more spoke with tongues than any of their successors.

7. I need therefore take no trouble about your subsequent reasonings, seeing they are built on such a foundation. Only I must observe an historical mistake which occurs toward the bottom of your next page. Since the reformation, you say, "This gift has never once been heard of, or pretended to by the Romanists themselves," (p. 122.) But has it been *pretended to* (whether justly or not) by no others, though not by the Romanists? Has it never once been heard of" since that time? Sir, your memory fails you again. It has undoubtedly been "pretended to," and that at no great distance either from our time or country. It has been "heard of" more than *once*, no farther off than the valleys of Dauphiny. Nor is it yet fifty years ago, since the Protestant inhabitants of those valleys so loudly *pretended* to this and other miraculous powers, as to give much disturbance to Paris itself. And how did the king of France confute that pretence, and prevent its being heard any more? Not by the pen of his scholars, but by (a truly Heathen way) the swords and bayonets of his dragoons.

8. You close this head with a very extraordinary thought. "The gift of tongues may," you say, "be considered as a proper test or criterion for determining the miraculous pretensions of all churches. If among their extraordinary gifts they cannot shew us this, they have none to shew which are genuine," p. 122.

Now I really thought it had been otherwise. I thought it had been an adjudged rule in the case, *All these worketh one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.* And as to every man, so to every church, every collective body of men. But if this be so, then yours is no proper test, for determining the pretensions of all churches: seeing he who worketh as he will, may (with *your* good leave) give the gift of tongues, where he gives no other: and may see abundant reasons so to do, whether you and I see them or not. For perhaps we have not always *known the mind of the Lord;* not being of the number of his coun-

sellors. On the other hand, he may see good to give many other gifts, where it is not his will to bestow this. Particularly where it would be of no use: as in a church where all are of one mind, and all speak the same language.

9. You have now finished (after a fashion) what you proposed to do in the fourth place, which was, "to review all the several kinds of miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have been in the primitive church." Indeed, you have dropped one or two of them by the way; against the rest you have brought forth your strong reasons. Those reasons have been coolly examined. And now let every impartial man, every person of true and unbiassed reason, calmly consider and judge, whether you have made out one point of all that you took in hand? And whether some miracles of each kind may not have been wrought in the ancient church, for any thing you have advanced to the contrary?

10. From the 127th to the 158th page, you relate miracles said to be wrought in the fourth century. I have no concern with these; but I must weigh an argument which you intermix therewith again and again. It is in substance this; "If we cannot believe the miracles attested by the later Fathers, then we ought not to believe those which are attested by the earliest writers of the church." I answer, the consequence is not good; because the case is not the same with the one and with the other. Several objections, which do not hold with regard to the earlier, may lie against the later miracles; drawn either from the improbability of the facts themselves, such as we have no precedent of in holy writ; from the incompetency of the instruments said to perform them, such as bones, relics, or departed saints; or from the gross "credulity of a prejudiced, or the dishonesty of an interested relator," p. 145.

11. One or other of these objections holds against most of the later (though not the earlier) miracles. And if only one holds, it is enough; it is ground sufficient for making the difference. If therefore it was true, that there was not a single father of the fourth age, who was not equally

pious with the best of the more ancient, still we might consistently reject most of the miracles of the fourth, while we allowed those of the preceding ages; both because of the far greater improbability of the facts themselves, and because of the incompetency of the instruments.

But it is not true, that, "the fathers of the fourth age," whom you mention, were equally pious with the best of the preceding ages. Nay, according to your account, (which I shall not now contest) they were not pious at all. For you say, "They were wilful, habitual liars." And if so, they had not a grain of piety. Now that the earlier fathers were not such, has been shewn at large, (though indeed you complimented them with the same character.) Consequently, whether these later fathers are to be believed or not, we may safely believe the former: who dared not to do evil that good might come, or to lie either for God or man.

12. I had not intended to say any thing more, concerning any of the miracles of the later ages. But your way of accounting for one, said to have been wrought in the fifth, is so extremely curious that I cannot pass it by.

The story, it seems, is this: "Hunneric, an Arian prince, in his persecution of the orthodox in Afric, ordered the tongues of a certain society off them to be cut out by the roots. But by a surprising instance of God's good providence, they were enabled to speak articulately and distinctly, without their tongues, And so continuing to make open profession of the same doctrine, they became not only preachers, but living witnesses of its truth." p. 182.

Do not mistake me, Sir. I have no design at all to vouch for the truth of this miracle. I leave it just as I find it. But what I am concerned with is, your manner of accounting for it.

13. And first, you say, "It may not improbably be supposed, that though their tongues were ordered to be cut to the roots, yet the sentence might not be so strictly executed, as not to leave in some of them such a share of that organ as was sufficient, in a tolerable degree, for the use of

speech." (p. 183.) So you think, Sir, if only an inch of a man's tongue were to be neatly taken off, he would be able to talk tolerably well, as soon as the operation was over.

But the most marvellous part is still behind. For you add, "To come more close to the point. If we should allow that the tongues of these confessors were cut away to the very roots, what will the learned doctor say, if this boasted miracle should be found at last to be no miracle at all?" p. 184.

Say? Why, that you have more skill than all the *strolling wonder-workers* of the three first centuries put together.

But to the point. Let us see how you will set about it. Why thus: "The tongue," as you justly, though keenly observe, "has generally been considered as absolutely necessary to the use of speech. So that to hear men talk without it, might easily pass for a miracle in that credulous age. Yet there was always room to doubt, whether there was any thing miraculous in it or not. But we have an instance in the present century, which clears up all our doubts, and entirely decides the question. I mean, the case of a girl born without a tongue, who talked as easily and distinctly as if she had had one; an account of which is given in the Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences at Paris." ibid.

14. And can you really believe this? That a girl *spoke distinctly and easily* without any tongue at all? And after avowing this belief, do you gravely talk of other men's credulity? I wonder that such a volunteer in faith should stagger at any thing. Doubtless, were it related as natural only, not miraculous, you could believe, that a man might see without eyes!

Surely there is something very peculiar in this; something extraordinary, though not miraculous; that a man, who is too wise to believe the bible, should believe every thing but the bible! Should swallow any tale, so God be

out of the question, though ever so improbable, ever so impossible!

15. "I have now," you say, "thrown together all which I had collected for the support of my argument;" (p. 187,) a lame recapitulation of which you add with an air of triumph and satisfaction, (p. 188,) "I wish the fathers, the ablest advocates which popery itself can afford: for protestantism, I am sure, can supply none whom they would choose to retain in their cause: none who can defend them without contradicting their own profession, and disgracing their own character; or produce any thing, but what deserves to be laughed at, rather than answered." p. 189.

Might it not be well, Sir, not to be quite so *sure* yet? You may not always have the laugh on your side. You are not yet infallibly assured, but that even *protestantism* may *produce* something worth an answer. There may be some protestants, for aught you know, who have a few grains of common sense left, and may find a way to *defend*, at least the *Antenicene fathers*, without "disgracing their own character." Even such an one as I, have faintly attempted this: although I neither have, nor expect to have any preferment; not even to be a *Lambeth chaplain*: which if Dr. Middleton is not, it is not his own fault.

V. 1. The last thing you proposed was, "To refute some of the most plausible objections which have been hitherto made." To what you have offered on this head, I must likewise attempt a short reply.

You say, "It is objected, first, That by the character I have given of the fathers, the authority of the books of the New Testament, which were transmitted to us through their hands, will be rendered precarious and uncertain. (p. 190.)

After a feint of confuting it, you frankly acknowledge the whole of this objection. "I may venture," you say, "to declare, that if this objection be true, it cannot hurt my argument. For if it be natural and necessary, that the craft and credulity of witnesses should always detract from the credit of their testimony: then who can help it? And

if this charge be proved on the fathers, it must be admitted, how far soever the consequences may reach." p. 192.

"If it be proved,"—Very true. If that charge against the fathers were really and substantially proved, the authority of the New Testament would be at an end, so far as it depends on one kind of evidence. But that charge is not proved. Therefore even the traditional authority of the New Testament is as firm as ever.

2. It is objected, you say, secondly, "That all suspicion of fraud in the case of the primitive miracles, is excluded by that public appeal and challenge which the Christian apologists make to their enemies the Heathens, to come and see with their own eyes the reality of the facts which they attest." p. 193.

You answer, "This objection has no real weight with any who are acquainted with the condition of the Christians in those days." You then enlarge (as it seems, with a peculiar pleasure) on the general contempt and odium they lay under, from the first appearance of Christianity in the world, till it was established by the civil power. p. 194--196.

"In these circumstances it cannot be imagined," you say, "that men of figure and fortune would pay any attention to the apologies or writings of a sect so utterly despised." (p. 197.) But, Sir, they were hated as well as despised; and that by the great vulgar as well as the small. And this very hatred would naturally prompt them to examine the ground of the challenges daily repeated by them they hated: were it only, that by discovering the fraud, (which they wanted neither opportunity nor skill to do, had there been any,) they might have had a better pretence for throwing *the Christians to the lions*, than because the Nile did not, or the Tiber did overflow.

3. You add, "Much less can we believe that the emperor or senate of Rome should take any notice of those apologies, or even know indeed that any such were addressed to them." (p. 197.) Why, Sir, by *your* account you would make us believe, that all the emperors and

senate together were as "senseless, stupid a race of blockheads and brutes;" as even the Christians themselves.

But hold. You are going to prove it too. "For," say you, "should the like case happen now, that any Methodist, Moravian, or French prophet," (right skilfully put together,) "should publish an apology for his brethren, addressed to the king and parliament; is it not wholly improbable, that the government would pay any regard to it?" You should add, (to make the parallel complete,) "or know that any such was addressed to them."

No? I conceive the improbability supposed lies wholly on the other side. Whatever the government of Heathen Rome was, (which I presume *you* will not depreciate,) the government of England is remarkable for tenderness to the very meanest subject. It is, therefore, not improbable in the least, that an address from some thousands of those subjects, how contemptible soever they were generally esteemed, "would not be totally disregarded by such a government. But that they should "not know that any such had been addressed to them," is not only improbable, but morally impossible.

If, therefore, it were possible for the Heathens to "have a worse opinion of the ancient Christians, than we," you say, "have of our modern fanatics," still it is utterly incredible, that the Roman government should not only "take no notice of their Apologies," but not even know that any such were addressed to them.

4. "But the publishing books was more expensive then, than it is now. And, therefore, we cannot think the Christians of those days were able to provide such a number of them as was sufficient for the information of the public." p. 198, 199.

Nay, if they were not able to provide themselves food and raiment, they would be sure to provide a sufficient number of these: sufficient at least for the information of the emperor and senate, to whom those apologies were addressed. And how great a number, do you suppose, might suffice for them? How many hundreds or thousands of copies?

I apprehend the emperor would be content with one. And one more would be needful for the senate. Now I really believe the Christians of those days were able to provide both these copies. Nay, and even two more; if it should have fallen out, that two or three emperors were on the throne: even though we should suppose, that in Tertullian's time there were but forty thousand of them in all Rome.

5. However, you plunge on: "Since then the Christians were not able to bear the expense of copying them," (whether the Heathens were disposed to buy them, or not, is at present out of the question,) "there is great reason to believe, that their apologies, how gravely soever addressed to emperors and senates, lay unknown for many years." There is no great reason to believe it from any thing you have advanced yet. You add, "especially when the publishing of them was not only expensive, but so criminal also, as to expose them often to danger, and even to capital punishment." p. 199.

In very deed, Sir, I am sometimes inclined to suspect, that you are yourself related to certain ancient fathers, notwithstanding the learned quotations which adorn your margin) who used to say, *Græcum est: non potest legi.* You lay me under an almost invincible temptation to think so upon this very occasion. For what could induce you, if you knew what he said, to place at the bottom of this very page, a passage from one of those apologists, Justin Martyr, which so clearly confutes your own argument? The words are, * *Although death be determined against those who teach, or even confess the name of Christ; we both embrace and teach it every where. And if you also receive these words as enemies, you can do no more than kill us.* Could *danger* then, or the fear of *capital punishment* restrain those Chris-

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* Καιτοι γε θανατου οριζοντος κατα των διδασκοντων, η ολως ομολογουντων το ονομα του Χριστου, ημειν πανταχου και ασπαζομεθα και διδασκομεν. Ει δε και υμεις ως εχθροι ενδευξεσθε τοισδε τοις λογοις, ου πλεον τι δυνασθε του φονευειν.

Just. Mart. Apol. i. p. 69.

tians from presenting these apologies? No: capital punishment was no terror to them, who daily offered themselves to the flames: till the very Heathen butchers themselves were tired with slaughtering them.

There can, therefore, no shadow of doubt remain, with any cool and impartial man, but that these apologies were presented to the most eminent Heathens, to the magistrates, the senate, the emperors. Nor, consequently, is there the least room to doubt of the truth of the facts therein asserted: seeing the apologists constantly defied their enemies, "to come and see them with their own eyes:" a hazard which those *crafty men* would never have run, had not the facts themselves been infallibly certain. This objection then stands against you in full force. For such a public appeal to their bitterest enemies must "exclude all reasonable suspicion of fraud, in the case of the primitive miracles."

6. You tell us, it is objected, thirdly, "That no suspicion of fraud can reasonably be entertained against those who exposed themselves even to martyrdom, in confirmation of the truth of what they taught." p. 194.

In order to invalidate this objection, you assert, "That some of the primitive Christians might expose themselves to martyrdom, out of mere obstinacy; (p. 200.) others from a desire of glory; (p. 201.) others, from a fear of reproach; (p. 208.) but the most of all, from the hope of a higher reward in heaven; (p. 202.) especially as they believed, the end of the world was near, and that the martyrs felt no pain in death." (p. 203, 204.) "All which topics," you say, "when displayed with art, were sufficient to inflame the multitude to embrace any martyrdom." p. 208.

This appears very plausible in speculation. But fact and experience will not answer. You are an eloquent man, and able to display any topic you please, with art enough. Yet if you were to try, with all that art and eloquence, to persuade by all these topics, not a whole multitude, but one simple credulous ploughman, to go and be shot through the head; I am afraid, you would scarce prevail with him after all, to embrace even that easy martyrdom. And it

might be more difficult still to find a man, who either out of obstinacy, fear of shame, or desire of glory, would calmly and deliberately offer himself to be roasted alive in Smithfield.

7. Have you considered, Sir, how the case stood in our own country, scarce two hundred years ago? Not a multitude, indeed, and yet not a few, of our own countrymen then expired in the flames. And it was not a general persuasion among them, that martyrs feel no pain in death. That these had feeling, as well as other men, plainly appeared, in the case of bishop Ridley, crying out, "I cannot burn, I cannot burn," when his lower parts were consumed. Do you think the fear of shame, or the desire of praise, was the motive on which these acted? Or have you reason to believe it was mere obstinacy that hindered them from accepting deliverance? Sir, "since human nature has always been the same, so that our experience of what now passes in our own soul, will be the best comment on what is delivered to us concerning others," let me intreat you, to make the case your own. You must not say, 'I am not one of the ignorant vulgar: I am a man of sense and learning.' So were many of them; not inferior even to you, either in natural or acquired endowments. I ask then, would any of these motives suffice to induce you to burn at a stake? I beseech you, lay your hand on your heart, and answer between God and your own soul, what motive could incite you to walk into a fire, but an hope full of immortality? When you mention this motive, you speak to the point. And yet even with regard to this, both you and I should find, did it come to a trial, that the hope of a fool, or the hope of an hypocrite, would stand us in no stead. We should find nothing else would sustain us in that hour, but a well-grounded confidence of a better resurrection; nothing less than the 'steadfastly looking up to heaven, and beholding the glory which shall be revealed.'

8. "But Heretics," you say, "have been martyrs." I will answer more particularly, when you specify who? and when? It may suffice to say now, whosoever he be, that

rather than he will offend God, calmly and deliberately chooses to suffer death, I cannot lightly speak evil of him.

But Cyprian says, 'Some who had suffered tortures for Christ, yet afterwards fell into gross, open sin.' It may be so: but it is nothing to the question. It does not prove in the least, what you brought it to prove, namely, "That bad men have endured martyrdom." Do not evade, Sir, and say, "Yes, torments are a kind of martyrdom." True; but not the martyrdom of which we speak.

9. You salve all at last, by declaring gravely, "It is not my design to detract in any manner from the just praise of those primitive martyrs, who sustained the cause of Christ at the expense of their lives." (p. 112.) No. Who could ever suppose it was? Who could imagine it was your design to detract from the *just praise* of Justin, Irenæus, or Cyprian? You only desired to shew, what their just praise was, namely, the praise of pick-pockets, of common cheats and impostors. We understand your meaning, therefore, when you add, "It is reasonable to believe, that they were the best sort of Christians, and the chief ornaments of the church in their several ages." p. 113.

10. You conclude, "My view is to shew, that their martyrdom does not add any weight to their testimony." Whether it does or not, "It gives the strongest proof," (as you yourself affirm,) "of the sincerity of their faith:" and consequently proves, "that no suspicion of fraud can reasonably be entertained against them." (ibid.) But this (which you seem to have quite forgot) was the whole of the objection: and, consequently, this, as well as both the former objections, remain in their full force.

11. It has been objected, fourthly, you say, That you "destroy the faith and credit of all history," (p. 114.) But this objection, you affirm, "when seriously considered, will appear to have no sense at all in it." p. 115.

That we will try. And one passage, home to the point, is as good as a thousand. Now, Sir, be pleased to look back. In your preface, (p. 9,) I read these words: "The credibility of facts lies open to the trial of our reason and

senses. But the credibility of witnesses depends on a variety of principles wholly concealed from us. And though, in many cases, it may reasonably be presumed, yet in none can it certainly be known."

If this be as you assert, (I repeat it again) then farewel the credit of all history: Sir, this is not "the cant of zealots:" you must not escape so: it is plain, sober reason. If "the credibility of witnesses" (of all witnesses; for you make no distinction) depends, as you peremptorily affirm, on a variety of principles "wholly concealed from us," and consequently, though it may be presumed in many cases, yet can be certainly known in none: then it is plain, all history, sacred or profane, is utterly precarious and uncertain. Then I may indeed presume, but I cannot certainly know, that Julius Cæsar was killed in the senate-house: then I cannot certainly know, that there was an emperor in Germany, called Charles the fifth: that Leo the tenth ever sat in the see of Rome, or Lewis the fourteenth on the throne of France. Now let any man of common understanding judge, whether this objection has any sense in it, or not.

12. Under this same head, you fall again upon the case of witchcraft, and say, "There is not in all history, any one miraculous fact, so authentically attested as the existence of witches. All Christian" (yea and all Heathen) "nations whatsoever, have consented in the belief of them. Now to deny the reality of facts so solemnly attested, and so universally believed, seems to give the lie to the sense and experience of all Christendom: to the wisest and best of every nation, and to public monuments subsisting to our own times." p. 221.

What obliges you then to deny it? You answer, "The incredibility of the thing." O Sir, never strain at the incredibility of this, after you have swallowed—a hundred people talking without tongues.

13. What you aim at in this, also, is plain, as well as in your account of the Abbe de Paris: the point of your argument is, "If you cannot believe these, then you ought

not to believe the Bible: "The incredibility of the things related ought to over-rule all testimony whatsoever."

Your argument, at length, would run thus: "If things be incredible in themselves, then this incredibility ought to over-rule all testimony concerning them. But the gospel-miracles are incredible in themselves." Sir, that proposition I deny. You have not proved it yet. You have only now and then, as it were by the by, made an attempt to prove it. And till this is done, you have done nothing, with all the pother that you have made.

14. You reserve the home stroke for the last. "There is hardly a miracle said to be wrought in the primitive times, but what is said to be performed in our days. But all these modern pretensions, we ascribe to their true cause, the craft of a few, playing upon the credulity of the many, for private interest. When, therefore, we read of the same things done by the ancients, and for the same ends, of acquiring wealth, credit, or power: how can we possibly hesitate to impute them to the same cause of fraud and imposture?" p. 230.

The reason of our hesitation is this. They did not answer *the same ends*. The modern clergy of Rome do acquire credit and wealth by their pretended miracles. But the ancient clergy acquired nothing by their miracles, but to be *afflicted, destitute, tormented*. The one gain all things thereby; the others lost all things. And this, we think, makes some difference. 'Even unto this present hour,' says one of them, (writing to those who could easily confute him, if he spoke not the truth) 'we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place.—Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat. We are become as the filth of the world, as the offscouring of all things unto this day,' 1 Cor. iv. 11--13.—Now, Sir, whatever be thought of the others, we apprehend such clergy as these, labouring *thus*, unto the death, for *such* credit and wealth, are not chargeable with fraud and imposture.

VI. I have now finished what I had to say with regard to

your book. Yet, I think, humanity requires me to add a few words concerning some points frequently touched upon therein, which perhaps you do not so clearly understand.

We have been long disputing about Christians, about Christianity, and the *evidence* whereby it is supported. But what do these terms mean? Who is a Christian indeed? What is real, genuine Christianity? And what is the surest and most accessible evidence (if I may so speak) whereby I may know, that it is of God? May the God of the Christians enable me to speak on these heads, in a manner suitable to the importance of them?

Sect. I. 1. I would consider, first, Who is a Christian indeed? What does that term properly imply? It has been so long abused, I fear, not only to mean nothing at all, but, what was far worse than nothing, to be a cloak for the vilest hypocrisy, for the grossest abominations and immoralities of every kind, that it is high time to rescue it out of the hands of wretches that are a reproach to human nature: to shew determinately, what manner of man he is, to whom this name of right belongs.

2. A Christian cannot think of the Author of his Being, without abasing himself before him: without a deep sense of the distance between a worm of earth, and him that sitteth on the circle of the heavens. In his presence he sinks into the dust, knowing himself to be less than nothing in his eye: and being conscious, in a manner words cannot express, of his own littleness, ignorance, foolishness. So that he can only cry out, from the fulness of his heart, 'O God! What is man! What am I!'

3. He has a continual sense of his dependence on the Parent of Good, for his Being, and all the blessings that attend it. To him he refers every natural, and every moral endowment: with all that is commonly ascribed either to fortune, or to the wisdom, courage, or merit of the possessor. And hence he acquiesces in whatsoever appears to be his will, not only with patience, but with thankfulness. He willingly resigns all he is, all he has, to his wise and gracious disposal. The ruling temper of his heart, is the

most absolute submission, and the tenderest gratitude to his Sovereign Benefactor. And this grateful love creates filial fear: an awful reverence toward him, and an earnest care not to give place to any disposition, not to admit an action, word, or thought, which might in any degree displease that indulgent Power to whom he owes his life, breath, and all things.

4. And as he has the strongest affection for the Fountain of all Good, so he has the firmest confidence in him: a confidence which neither pleasure nor pain, neither life nor death can shake. But yet this, far from creating sloth or indolence, pushes him on to the most vigorous industry. It causes him to put forth all his strength, in obeying him in whom he confides. So that he is never faint in his mind, never weary of doing whatever he believes to be his Will. And as he knows, the most acceptable worship of God, is to imitate him he worships, so he is continually labouring to transcribe into himself all his imitable perfections; in particular, his justice, mercy, and truth, so eminently displayed in all his creatures.

5. Above all, remembering that God is Love, he is conformed to the same likeness. He is full of love to his neighbour, of universal love: not confined to one sect or party; not restrained to those who agree with him in opinions, in outward modes of worship; or to those who are allied to him by blood, or recommended by nearness of place. Neither does he love those only that love him, or are endeared to him by intimacy of acquaintance. But his love resembles that of him, whose mercy is over all his works. It soars above all these scanty bounds, embracing neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies: yea, not only the good and gentle, but also the froward; the evil and unthankful. For he loves every soul that God has made; every child of man, of whatever place or nation. And yet this universal benevolence does in no wise interfere with a peculiar regard for his relations, friends, and benefactors; a fervent love for his country; and the most

endeared affection to all men of integrity, of clear and generous virtue.

6. His love to these, so to all mankind, is in itself generous and disinterested; springing from no view of advantage to himself, from no regard to profit or praise: no, nor even the pleasure of loving. This is the daughter, not the parent of his affection. By experience he knows, that social love, (if it mean the love of our neighbour,) is absolutely different from self-love, even of the most allowable kind. Just as different as the objects at which they point. And yet it is sure, that, if they are under due regulations, each will give additional force to the other, till they mix together never to be divided.

7. And this universal, disinterested love, is productive of all right affections. It is fruitful of gentleness, tenderness, sweetness; of humanity, courtesy, and affability. It makes a Christian rejoice in the virtues of all, and bear a part in their happiness; at the same time that he sympathizes with their pains, and compassionates their infirmities. It creates modesty, condescension, prudence, together with calmness, and evenness of temper. It is the parent of generosity, openness, and frankness, void of jealousy and suspicion. It begets candour, and willingness to believe and hope whatever is kind and friendly of every man; and invincible patience, never overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good.

8. The same love constrains him to converse, not only with a strict regard to truth, but with artless sincerity and genuine simplicity, as one in whom there is no guile. And not content with abstaining from all such expressions as are contrary to justice or truth, he endeavours to refrain from every unloving word either to a present or of an absent person: in all his conversation aiming at this, either to improve himself in knowledge or virtue, or to make those with whom he converses some way wiser, or better, or happier than they were before.

9. The same love is productive of all right actions. It

leads him into an earnest and steady discharge of all social offices, of whatever is due to relations of every kind; to his friends, to his country, and to any particular community whereof he is a member. It prevents his willingly hurting or grieving any man. It guides him into an uniform practice of justice and mercy, equally extensive with the principle whence it flows. It constrains him to do all possible good, of every possible kind, to all men: and makes him invariably resolved, in every circumstance of life, to do that and that only, to others, which, supposing he were himself in the same situation, he would desire they should do to him.

10. And as he is easy to others, so he is easy to himself. He is free from the painful swellings of pride, from the flames of anger, from the impetuous gusts of irregular self-will. He is no longer tortured with envy or malice, or with unreasonable and hurtful desire. He is no more enslaved to the pleasures of sense, but has the full power both over his mind and body, in a continued cheerful course of sobriety, of temperance, and chastity. He knows how to use all things in their place, and yet is superior to them all. He stands above those low pleasures of imagination, which captivate vulgar minds, whether arising from what mortals term greatness, or novelty, or beauty. All these too he can taste, and still look upward; still aspire to nobler enjoyments. Neither is he a slave to fame: popular breath affects not him: he stands steady and collected in himself.

11. And he who seeks no praise, cannot fear dispraise. Censure gives him no uneasiness; being conscious to himself, that he would not willingly offend, and that he has the approbation of the Lord of all. He cannot fear want, knowing in whose hand is the earth and the fulness thereof, and that it is impossible for him to withhold from one that fears him any manner of thing that is good. He cannot fear pain, knowing it will never be sent, unless it be for his real advantage; and that then his strength will be proportioned to it, as it has always been in times past. He cannot fear death; being able to trust him he loves with his

soul as well as his body; yea, glad to leave the corruptible body in the dust, till it is raised incorruptible and immortal. So that in honour or shame, in abundance or want, in ease or pain, in life, or in death, always and in all things he has learned to be content, to be easy, thankful, happy.

12. He is happy in knowing there is a God, an intelligent Cause and Lord of all, and that he is not the produce either of blind chance or inexorable necessity. He is happy in the full assurance he has that this Creator and End of all things, is a Being of boundless wisdom, of infinite power to execute all the designs of his wisdom, and of no less infinite goodness, to direct all his power to the advantage of all his creatures. Nay, even the consideration of his immutable justice, rendering to all their due, of his unspotted holiness, of his all-sufficiency in himself, and of that immense ocean of all perfections, which centre in God from eternity to eternity, is a continual addition to the happiness of a Christian.

13. A farther addition is made thereto, while, in contemplating even the things that surround him, that thought strikes warmly upon his heart,

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good:"

While he takes knowledge of the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and wisdom in the things that are seen, the heavens, the earth, the fowls of the air, the lilies of the field. How much more, while, rejoicing in the constant care which he still takes of the work of his own hand, he breaks out, in a transport of love and praise, 'O Lord, our Governor! How excellent is thy Name in all the earth! Thou that hast set thy glory above the heavens!' While he, as it were, sees the Lord sitting upon his throne, and ruling all things well: while he observes the general Providence of God co-extended with his whole creation, and surveys all the effects of it in the heavens and the earth, as a well-pleased spectator; while he sees the wisdom and goodness of his general government descending to every particular; so presiding over the whole universe, as over a single person, so watching over every single person

as if he were the whole universe: how does he exult, when he reviews the various traces of the Almighty Goodness, in what has befallen himself in the several circumstances and changes of his own life! All which, he now sees, have been allotted to him, and dealt out in number, weight, and measure. With what triumph of soul, in surveying either the general or particular Providence of God, does he observe every line pointing out an hereafter, every scene opening into eternity.

14. He is peculiarly and inexpressibly happy, in the clearest and fullest conviction, 'This all-powerful, all-wise, all-gracious Being, this Governor of all, loves me. This lover of my soul is always with me, is never absent, no not for a moment. And I love him; there is none in heaven but thee, none on earth that I desire beside thee! And he has given me to resemble himself, he has stamped his image on my heart. And I live unto him; I do only his will; I glorify him with my body and my spirit. And it will not be long before I shall die unto him; I shall die into the arms of God. And then, farewel sin and pain; then it only remains, that I should live with him for ever.'

15. This is the plain, naked portraiture of a Christian. But, be not prejudiced against him for his name. Forgive his particularities of opinion, and (what you think) superstitious modes of worship. These are circumstances but of small concern; and do not enter into the essence of his character. Cover them with a veil of love, and look at the substance; his tempers, his holiness, his happiness.

Can calm reason conceive either a more amiable or a more desirable character? Is it your own? Away with names! Away with opinions! I care not what you are called. I ask not, (it does not deserve a thought,) what opinion you are of; so you are conscious to yourself, that you are the man, whom I have been (however faintly) describing.

Do not you know, you ought to be such? Is the Governor of the world well pleased that you are not? Do you (at least) desire it? I would to God that desire may pene-

trate your inmost soul; and that you may have no rest in your spirit, till you are not only almost, but altogether a Christian!

Sect. II. 1. The second point to be considered is, What is real, genuine Christianity? Whether we speak of it as a principle in the soul, or as a scheme or system of doctrine.

Christianity, taken in the latter sense, is, that system of doctrine, which describes the character above recited, which promises, it shall be mine, (provided I will not rest till I attain,) and which tells me how I may attain it.

2. First, It *describes* this character in all its parts, and that in the most lively and affecting manner. The main lines of this picture are beautifully drawn in many passages of the Old Testament. These are filled up in the New, retouched and finished with all the art of God. The same we have in miniature more than once; particularly in the thirteenth chapter of the former epistle to the Corinthians, and in that discourse which St. Matthew records, as delivered by our Lord, at his entrance upon his public ministry.

3. Secondly, Christianity *promises* this character shall be mine, if I will not rest till I attain it. This is promised in the Old Testament and New. Indeed the New is, in effect, all a promise; seeing every description of the servants of God mentioned therein, has the nature of a command; in consequence of those general injunctions, 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ,' 1 Cor. xi. 1. 'Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises,' Heb. vi. 12. And every command has the force of a promise, in virtue of those general promises: 'A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them,' Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. 'This is the covenant that I will make after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts,' Heb. viii. 10. Accordingly, when it is said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;' it is not only a direction what I shall do, but a promise of what God will do in me; exactly equivalent with what is written elsewhere, 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed (alluding to the custom then in use) to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,' Deut. xxx. 6.

4. This being observed, it will readily appear to every serious person, who reads the New Testament with that care, which the importance of the subject demands, that every particular branch of the preceding character is manifestly promised therein; either explicitly, under the very form of a promise, or virtually, under that of description or command.

5. Christianity tells me, in the third place, how I may attain the promise, namely, by faith. But what is faith? Not an opinion, no more than it is a form of words; not any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith, than a string of beads is Christian holiness.

It is not an assent to any opinion, or any number of opinions. A man may assent to three, or three and twenty creeds: he may assent to all the Old and New Testament, (at least, as far as he understands them,) and yet have no Christian faith at all.

6. The faith by which the promise is attained is represented by Christianity, as a power wrought by the Almighty in an immortal spirit, inhabiting a house of clay, to see through that veil into the world of spirits, into things invisible and eternal: a power to discern those things which with eyes of flesh and blood no man hath seen or can see; either by reason of their nature, which (though they surround us on every side,) is not perceivable by these gross senses; or by reason of their distance, as being yet afar off in the bosom of eternity.

7. This is Christian faith in the general notion of it. In its more particular notion it is, a divine evidence or conviction wrought in the heart, that God is reconciled to *me* thro'

his Son: inseparably joined with a confidence in him, as a gracious, reconciled Father, as for all things, so especially for all those good things which are invisible and eternal.

To believe (in the Christian sense) is then to walk in the light of eternity: and to have a clear sight of, and confidence in the Most High, reconciled to me through the Son of his love.

8. Now how highly desirable is such a faith, were it only on its own account! For how little does the wisest of men know of any thing more than he can see with his eyes! What clouds and darkness cover the whole scene of things invisible and eternal! What does he know even of himself as to his invisible part? What of his future manner of existence? How melancholy an account does the prying, learned philosopher, (perhaps the wisest and best of all Heathens,) the great, the venerable Marcus Antoninus give of these things? What was the result of all his serious researches? Of his high and deep contemplations? "Either dissipation (of the soul as well as the body, into the common, unthinking mass) or re-absorption into the universal fire, the unintelligent source of all things: or, some unknown manner of conscious existence, after the body sinks to rise no more." One of these three he supposed must succeed death, but which he had no light to determine. Poor Antoninus! With all his wealth, his honour, his power! With all his wisdom and philosophy!

"What points of knowledge did he gain?
That life is sacred all—and vain!
Sacred how high! And vain how low!
He could not tell—But died to know."

9. He died to know! And so must you, unless you are now a partaker of Christian faith. O consider this. Nay, and consider not only how little you know of the immensity of the things that are beyond sense and time, but how uncertainly do you know even that little! How faintly glimmering a light is that you have! Can you properly be said to *know* any of these things? Is that knowledge any more than bare conjecture? And the reason is plain. You

have no senses suitable to invisible or eternal objects. What *desiderata* then, especially to the rational, the reflecting part of mankind, are these? A more extensive knowledge of things invisible and eternal: a greater certainty in whatever knowledge of them we have; and, in order to both, faculties capable of discerning things invisible.

10. Is it not so? Let impartial reason speak. Does not every thinking man want a window, not so much in his neighbour's, as in his own breast? He wants an opening there, of whatever kind, that might let in light from eternity. He is pained to be thus feeling after God so darkly, so uncertainly; to know so little of God, and indeed so little of any beside material objects. He is concerned, that he must see that little, not directly, but in the dim, sullied glass of sense; and consequently so imperfectly and obscurely, that it is all a mere *ænigma* still.

11. Now these very *desiderata* faith supplies. It gives a more extensive knowledge of things invisible, shewing what eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither could it before enter into our heart to conceive. And all these it shews in the clearest light, with the fullest certainty and evidence. For it does not leave us to receive our notice of them, by mere reflection from the dull glass of sense; but resolves a thousand ænigmas of the highest concern, by giving faculties suited to things invisible. Oh! Who would not wish for such a faith, were it only on these accounts? How much more, if by this I may receive the promise, I may attain all that holiness and happiness!

12. So Christianity tells me; and so I find it, may every real Christian say. I now am assured that these things are so; I experience them in my own breast. What Christianity (considered as a doctrine) promised, is accomplished in my soul. And Christianity, considered as an inward principle, is the completion of all those promises. It is holiness and happiness, the image of God impressed on a created spirit; a fountain of peace and love springing up into everlasting life.

Sect. III. 1. And this I conceive to be the strongest evi-

dence of the truth of Christianity. I do not undervalue traditional evidence. Let it have its place and its due honour. It is highly serviceable in its kind, and in its degree. And yet I cannot set it on a level with this.

It is generally supposed, that traditional evidence is weakened by length of time; as it must necessarily pass through so many hands, in a continued succession of ages. But no length of time can possibly affect the strength of this internal evidence. It is equally strong, equally new, through the course of seventeen hundred years. It passes now, even as it has done from the beginning, directly from God into the believing soul! Do you suppose time will ever dry up this stream? O no. It shall never be cut off.

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

2. Traditional evidence is of an extremely complicated nature, necessarily including so many and so various considerations, that only men of a strong and clear understanding can be sensible of its full force. On the contrary, how plain and simple is this! And how level to the lowest capacity! Is not this the sum, '*One thing I know: I was blind, but now I see.*' An argument so plain, that a peasant, a woman, a child, may feel all its force.

3. The traditional evidence of Christianity stands as it were a great way off; and therefore although it speaks loud and clear, yet makes a less lively impression. It gives us an account of what was transacted long ago, in far distant times as well as places. Whereas the inward evidence is intimately present to all persons, at all times, and in all places. 'It is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, if thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ.' *This* then *is the record*, this is the evidence, emphatically so called, *That God hath given unto us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.*

4. If then it were possible (which I conceive it is not) to shake the traditional evidence of Christianity, still he that has the internal evidence, (and every true believer hath the witness or evidence in himself,) would stand firm and unshaken. Still he could say to those who were striking at the external evidence, 'Beat on the sack of Anaxagoras.'

But you can no more hurt *my* evidence of Christianity, than the tyrant could hurt the spirit of that wise man.

5. I have sometimes been almost inclined to believe, that the wisdom of God has, in most later ages, permitted the external evidence of Christianity to be more or less clogged and incumbered for this very end, that men, (of reflection especially) might not altogether rest there, but be constrained to look into themselves also, and attend to the light shining in their hearts.

Nay, it seems, (if it be allowed for us to pry so far into the reasons of the divine dispensations,) that particularly in this age, God suffers all kinds of objections to be raised against the traditional evidence of Christianity, that men of understanding, though unwilling to give it up, yet, at the same time they defend this evidence, may not rest the whole strength of their cause thereon, but seek a deeper and firmer support for it.

6. Without this, I cannot but doubt, whether they can long maintain their cause; whether, if they do not obey the loud call of God, and lay far more stress than they have hitherto done, on this internal evidence of Christianity, they will not, one after another, give up the external, and (in heart at least) go over to those whom they are now contending with; so that, in a century or two, the people of England will be fairly divided into real Deists and real Christians. And I apprehend this would be no loss at all. but rather an advantage to the Christian cause; nay, perhaps it would be the speediest, yea, the only effectual way of bringing all reasonable Deists to be Christians.

7. May I be permitted to speak freely? May I, without offence, ask of you that are called Christians, what real loss would you sustain in giving up your present opinion, that the Christian system is of God? Though you bear the name, you are not Christians; you have neither Christian faith nor love. You have no divine evidence of things unseen: you have not entered into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. You do not love God with all your hearts;

neither do you love your neighbour as yourselves. You are neither happy nor holy. You have not learned in every state therewith to be content; to rejoice evermore, even in want, pain, death; and in every thing to give thanks. You are not holy in heart; superior to pride, to anger, to foolish desires. Neither are you holy in life: you do not walk as Christ also walked. Does not the main of *your* Christianity lie in your opinions? Decked with a few outward observances? For as to morality, even honest Heathen morality, (O let me utter a melancholy truth,) many of those whom you style Deists, there is reason to fear have far more of it than you.

8. Go on, gentlemen, and prosper. Shame these nominal Christians out of that poor superstition which they call Christianity. Reason, rally, laugh them out of their dead, empty forms, void of spirit, of faith, of love. Convince them, that such mean pageantry (for such it manifestly is, if there is nothing in the heart correspondent with the outward shew) is absolutely unworthy, you need not say of God, but even of any man that is endued with common understanding. Shew them, that while they are endeavouring to please God thus, they are only beating the air. Know your time; press on; push your victories, till you have conquered all that know not God. And then He, whom neither they nor you know now, shall rise and gird himself with strength, and go forth in his almighty love, and sweetly conquer you all together.

9. O that the time were come! How do I long for you to be partakers of the exceeding great and precious promise! How am I pained when I hear any of *you* using those silly terms, which the men of form have taught you, calling the mention of the only thing you want, *Cant!* The deepest wisdom, the highest happiness, *Enthusiasm!* What ignorance is this! How extremely despicable would it make you in the eyes of any but a Christian! But he cannot despise you, who loves you as his own soul, who is ready to lay down his life for your sake.

10. Perhaps you will say, "But this internal evidence of Christianity affects only those in whom the promise is fulfilled. It is no evidence to *me*." There is truth in this objection. It does affect them chiefly; but it does not affect them only. It cannot, in the nature of things, be so strong an evidence to others as it is to them. And yet it may bring a degree of evidence, it may reflect some light on you also.

For, first, You see the beauty and loveliness of Christianity, when it is rightly understood. And you are sure there is nothing to be desired in comparison of it.

Secondly, You know the Scripture promises, and says, It is attained by faith, and by no other way.

Thirdly, You see clearly how desirable Christian faith is, even on account of its own intrinsic value.

Fourthly, You are a witness, that the holiness and happiness above described can be attained no other way. The more you have laboured after virtue and happiness, the more convinced you are of this. Thus far then you need not lean upon other men: thus far you have personal experience.

Fifthly, What reasonable assurance can you have of things whereof you have not personal experience? Suppose the question were, Can the blind be restored to sight? This you have not yourself experienced. How then will you know that such a thing ever was? Can there be an easier or surer way than to talk with one or some number of men who were blind, but are now restored to sight? They cannot be deceived as to the fact in question, the nature of the thing leaves no room for this. And if they are honest men, (which you may learn from other circumstances,) they will not deceive you.

Now transfer this to the case before us; and those who were blind, but now see; those who were sick many years, but now are healed; those who were miserable, but now are happy, will afford *you* also a very strong evidence of the truth of Christianity: as strong as can be in the nature

of things, till you experience it in your own soul. And this, though it be allowed they are but plain men, and, in general, of weak understanding; nay, though some of them should be mistaken in other points, and hold opinions which cannot be defended.

11. All this may be allowed concerning the primitive fathers: I mean particularly Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyprian; to whom I would add Macarius and Ephraim Syrus.

I allow that some of these had not strong natural sense, that few of them had much learning, and none the assistances which our age enjoys, in some respects, above all that went before.

Hence, I doubt not but whoever will be at the pains of reading over their writings for that poor end, he will find many mistakes, many weak suppositions, and many ill-drawn conclusions.

12. And yet I exceedingly reverence them as well as their writings, and esteem them very highly in love. I reverence them because they were Christians, such Christians as are above described. And I reverence their writings, because they describe true, genuine Christianity; and direct us to the strongest evidence of the Christian doctrine.

Indeed in addressing the Heathens of those times they intermix other arguments; particularly that drawn from numerous miracles, which were then performed in the church; which they needed only to open their eyes and see daily wrought in the face of the sun.

But still they never relinquish this; "What the Scripture promises I enjoy. Come and see what Christianity has done here: and acknowledge it is of God."

I reverence these ancient Christians (with all their failings) the more, because I see so few Christians now; because I read so little in the writings of later times, and hear so little of genuine Christianity: and because most of the modern Christians (so called) not content with being

wholly ignorant of it, are deeply prejudiced against it, calling it enthusiasm, and I know not what.

That the God of power and love may make both them and you, and me, such Christians as those fathers were, is the earnest prayer of,

Rev. Sir,

Your real Friend and Servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

Jan. 24, 1748-9.

A LETTER

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

The Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

OCCASIONED BY HIS TRACT ON THE

OFFICE AND OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MY LORD,

YOUR lordship well observes, "to employ *buffoonery* in the service of religion, is to violate the majesty of truth, and to deprive it of a fair hearing. To examine, men must be *serious*." (Pref. p. 11.) I will endeavour to be so, in all the following pages. And the rather, not only because I am writing to a person who is so far, and in so many respects, my superior, but also because of the importance of the subject. For is the question only, What I am? A madman, or a man in his senses? A knave, or an honest man? No: this is only brought in by way of illustration. The question is, of the Office and Operation of the Holy Spirit; with which the doctrine of the New-Birth, and, indeed, the whole of real religion, is connected. On a subject of so deep concern, I desire to be serious as death. But, at the same time, your Lordship will permit me to use great plainness. And this I am the more emboldened to do, because by naming my name, your lordship, as it were, condescends to meet me on even ground.

I shall consider, first, what your lordship advances concerning me; and then what is advanced concerning the Operations of the Holy Spirit.

I. First, concerning me. It is true, I am here dealing in *crambe repetita:* reciting objections which have been urged and answered a hundred times. But as your lordship is pleased to repeat them again, I am obliged to repeat the answers.

Your lordship begins, "If the false prophet pretend to some *extraordinary* measure of the Spirit, we are directed to try that spirit by James chap. iii. 17." I answer, 1. (as I have done many times before) I do not pretend to any *extraordinary* measure of the Spirit. I pretend to no other measure of it than may be claimed by every Christian minister. 2. Where are we directed to *try prophets* by this text? How does it appear, that it was given for any such purpose? It is certain we may *try Christians* hereby, whether they are real or pretended ones. But I know not that either St. James or any other inspired writer, gives us the least hint of *trying prophets* thereby.

Your lordship adds "In this rule or direction for the trial of spirits, the marks are to be applied only negatively. The man in whom they are not found, hath not the wisdom from above. But we are not to conclude, that he has it, in whom any or all of them are found," (p. 118.) We are not to conclude, that he is a prophet: for the apostle says nothing about prophets. But may we not conclude, the man in whom all these are found, has *the wisdom from above?* Surely we may: for these are the essential parts of that wisdom. And can he have *all the parts*, and not have *the whole?*

Is not this enough to shew, that the apostle is here giving "a set of marks not to detect impostor-prophets," but *impostor-Christians?* Those that impose either upon themselves or others, as if they were Christians, when they are not?

In what follows, I shall simply consider the argument, without directly addressing your lordship.

"Apply these marks to the features of modern fanatics, especially Mr. John Wesley. He has laid claim to almost

every apostolic gift, in as full and ample a manner as they were possessed of old," p. 119.

The *miraculous gifts* bestowed upon the apostles are enumerated in two places. First, 'In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover,' (Mark xvi. 17, 18.) Second, 'To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith, to another the gifts of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues,' 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10.

Do "I lay claim to *almost every one* of these, in as *full and ample* a manner as they were possessed of old?"

Five of them are enumerated in the former catalogue: to three of which, 'speaking with new tongues, taking up serpents, drinking deadly things,' it is not even pretended I lay any claim at all. In the latter, nine are enumerated. And as to seven of these, none has yet seen good to call me in question: miraculous *wisdom*, or *knowledge*, or *faith*, *prophecy*, *discernment of spirits*, strange *tongues*, and *the interpretation of tongues*. What becomes then of the assertion, that I lay claim to *almost every one* of them, in the most *full* and *ample* manner? Do I lay claim to *any one* of them? To prove that I do, my own words are produced, extracted from an account of the occurrences of about sixteen years.

I shall set them down naked and unadorned. 1. May 13, 1740, "The devil stirred up his servants to make all the noise they could. 2. May 3, 1741, I explained to a vast multitude of people, 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' The devil's children fought valiantly for their master, that his kingdom should not be destroyed. And many stones fell on my right hand and on my left. 3. April 3, 1740, Some or other of the children of Belial,

had laboured to disturb us several nights before. Now all the street was filled with people, shouting, cursing, swearing, and ready to swallow the ground with rage. (p. 120.) 4. June 27, 1747, I found only one person among them, who knew the love of God before my brother came. No wonder the devil was so still: 'for his goods were in peace.' 5. April 29, 1753, I preached at Durham, to a quiet, stupid congregation. (p. 121.) 6. May 9, 1740, I was a little surprised, at some who were buffeted of Satan in an unusual manner, by such a spirit of laughter as they could in no wise resist. I could scarcely have believed the account they gave me, had I not known the same thing ten or eleven years ago, when both my brother and I were seized in the same manner. (If any man call this hysterics, I am not concerned: I think and let think.) 7. May 21, 1740, In the evening, such a spirit of laughter was among us, that many were much offended. But the attention of all was soon fixed on poor L— S—, whom we all knew to be no dissembler. One so violently and variously torn of the evil one, did I never see before. Sometimes she laughed till almost strangled; then broke out into cursing and blaspheming. At last she faintly called on Christ to help her, And the violence of her pangs ceased. (Let any one who please impute this likewise to hysterics. Only permit me to think otherwise.) 8. "May 17, 1740, I found more and more undeniable proofs, that we have need to watch and pray every moment. Outward trials indeed were now removed. But so much the more did inward trials abound; and 'if one member suffered, all the members suffered with it.' So strange a sympathy did I never observe before, whatever considerable temptation fell on any one, unaccountably spreading itself to the rest: so that exceedingly few were able to escape it," p. 122, 123.

I know not what these eight quotations prove, but that I believe the devil still variously tempts and troubles good men; while he 'works with energy in the children of disobedience.' Certainly they do not prove that I lay claim to any of the preceding gifts. Let us see whether any

more is proved, by the ten next quotations. 1. "So many living witnesses hath God given, that his hand is still stretched out to heal," (namely, the souls of sinners, as the whole paragraph fixes the sense,) "and that signs and wonders are even now wrought," (p. 124,) namely, in the conversion of the greatest sinners. 2. "Among the poor colliers of Placey, Jo. Lane, then nine or ten years old, was one of the first that found peace with God. (ibid.) 3. Mrs. Nowers said, her little son appeared to have a continual fear of God, and an awful sense of his presence.—A few days since (she said) he broke out into prayers aloud, and said, I shall go to heaven soon." This child (when he begun to have the fear of God) was (as his parents said) just three years old. 4. I did receive that "account of the young woman of Manchester from her own mouth." But I pass no judgment on it, good or bad: nor, 5. On "the *trance*," (p. 126,) as her mother called it, of S. T. neither denying nor affirming the truth of it. 6. "You deny that God does work those effects; at least that he works them in this manner: I affirm both. I have seen very many persons changed in a moment, from the spirit of fear, horror, despair, to the spirit of love, joy, and praise. In several of them this change was wrought in a dream, or during a strong representation to their mind, of Christ either on the cross, or in glory," p. 127.

"But here the symptoms of grace and of perdition are interwoven and confounded with one another." (p. 128.) No. Though light followed darkness, yet they were not interwoven, much less confounded with each other. 7. "But some imputed the work to the force of imagination, or even to the delusion of the devil," (ibid.) They did so; which made me say, 8. 'I fear we have grieved the Spirit of the jealous God, by questioning his work,' (ibid.) 9. "Yet he says himself, these symptoms I can no more impute to any natural cause, than to the Spirit of God. I make no doubt, it was Satan tearing them as they were coming to Christ," (p. 129.) But *these symptoms*, and *the work* mentioned before, are wholly different things. The *work* spoken of

is the conversion of sinners to God: these *symptoms* are cries, and bodily pain. The very next instance makes this plain. 10. "I visited a poor old woman. Her trials had been uncommon: inexpressible agonies of mind, joined with all sorts of bodily pain: not, it seemed, from any natural cause, but the direct operation of Satan," p. 130.

Neither do any of those quotations prove, that I lay claim to any miraculous gift.

"Such was the evangelic state of things, when Mr. W. first entered on this ministry: who seeing himself surrounded with subjects, so harmoniously disposed, thus triumphantly exults." To illustrate this, let us add the date. "Such was the evangelic state of things, Aug. 9, 1750." (On that day, I preached that *sermon*:) "when Mr. W. *first entered on this ministry*." Nay, that was in the year 1738. So I triumphed, because I saw what would be twelve years after!

Let us see what the ten next quotations prove. 1. "In applying these words, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' my soul was so enlarged, that methought I could have cried out, (in another sense than poor, vain Archimedes,) Give me where to stand, and I will shake the earth," (p. 130.) I meant neither more nor less, (though I will not justify the use of so strong an expression,) than I was so deeply penetrated with a sense of the love of God to sinners, that it seemed, if I could have declared it to all the world, they could not but be moved thereby.

"Here then was a scene well prepared for a good actor, and excellently *fitted up* for *the part*, he was to play." But how came so good an actor to begin playing *the part*, twelve years before the scene was *fitted up*?

"He sets out with declaring his mission. 2. I cried aloud, 'All things are ready: come ye to the marriage.' I then delivered my message." And does not every minister do the same whenever he preaches? But how is this? "He *sets out* with declaring his mission?" Nay, but this was ten years *after* my *setting* out!

3. "My heart was not wholly resigned. Yet I know he heard my voice. 4. The longer I spoke the more strength I had: till at twelve, I was as one refreshed with wine. 5. I explained the nature of inward religion, words flowing upon me faster than I could speak. 6. I intended to have given an exhortation to the society. But as soon as we met, the Spirit of supplication fell upon us, (on the congregation as well as me,) so that I could hardly do any thing but pray and give thanks," (p. 132, 133.) I believe every true Christian may experience all that is contained in these three instances. 7. "The spirit of prayer was so poured upon us all, that we could only speak to God. 8. Many were seated on a wall, which in the middle of the sermon fell down; but not one was hurt at all. Nor was there any interruption, either of my speaking, or of the attention of the hearers. 9. The mob had just broke open the doors, and while they burst in at one door, we walked out at the other. Nor did one man take any notice of us, though we were within five yards of each other," (p. 133, 134, 135.) The fact was just so. I do not attempt to account for it; because I cannot. 10. "The next miracle was on his friends." They were no friends of mine. I had seen few of them before in my life. Neither do I say or think it was any miracle at all, that they were all "silent while I spake;" or that "the moment I had done, the chain fell off, and they all began talking at once."

Do any, or all of these quotations prove, that I "lay claim to *almost every* miraculous gift?"

Will the eight following quotations prove any more? 1. "Some heard perfectly well on the side of the opposite hill, which was seven-score yards from the place where I stood," (p. 135.) I believe they did, as it was a calm day, and the hill rose gradually like a theatre. 2. "What I here aver is the naked fact. Let every one account for it as he sees good. My horse was exceedingly lame. And my head ached much. I thought, cannot God heal man or beast, by means, or without? Immediately my weariness and head-ache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same

instant." (p. 136.) It was so: and I believe thousands of serious Christians, have found as plain answers to prayer as this. 3. William Kirkman's case proves only, that God does what pleases him; not that I make myself either "a great saint, or a great physician," (p. 137.) 4. "R. A. was freed at once, without any human means, from a distemper naturally incurable," (p. 138.) He was: but it was before I knew him. So what is that to me? 5. "I found Mr. Lunell in a violent fever. He revived the moment he saw me, and began to recover from that time. Perhaps for this also was I sent," (ibid.) I mean, perhaps this was one end, for which the providence of God brought me thither at that time. 6. "In the evening I called upon Ann Calcut. She had been speechless for some time. But almost as soon as we began to pray, God restored her speech. And from that hour the fever left her. 7. I visited several ill of the spotted fever, which had been extremely mortal. But God had said, 'Hitherto shalt thou come.' I believe there was not one with whom we were, but he recovered. 8. Mr. Meyrick had been speechless and senseless for some time. A few of us joined in prayer. Before we had done, his sense and his speech returned. Others may account for this by natural causes. I believe this is the power of God," (p. 139.)

But what does all this prove? Not that I claim any gift above other men; but only that I believe God now hears and answers prayer, even beyond the ordinary course of nature. Otherwise the clerk was in the right, who (in order to prevent the *fanaticism* of his rector) told him, "Sir, you should not pray for fair weather yet; for the moon does not change till Saturday."

While the two accounts, (p. 143--146,) which are next recited, lay before me, a venerable old clergyman calling upon me, I asked him, 'Sir, would you advise me to publish these strange relations, or not?' He answered, 'Are you sure of the facts?' I replied, 'As sure as that I am alive.' 'Then,' said he, 'publish them in God's name, and be not careful about the event.'

The short of the case is this. Two young women were tormented of the devil, in an uncommon manner. Several serious persons desired my brother and me to pray with them. We (with many others) did, and they were delivered. But where, mean time, were "the exorcisms in form, according to the Roman fashion?" I never used them. I never saw them. I know nothing about them.

"Such were the blessings which Mr. W. *distributed* among his friends. For his enemies he had in store, the *judgments* of heaven." (p. 144.) Did I then ever *distribute* or profess to distribute these? Do I *claim* any such power? This is the present question. Let us calmly consider the eight quotations brought to prove it.

1. 'I preached at Darlaston, late a den of lions. But the fiercest of them God has called away, by a train of surprising strokes.' (ibid.) But not by me. I was not there. 2. 'I preached at R. late a place of furious riot and persecution: but quiet and calm, since the bitter rector is gone to give an account of himself to God. 3. Hence we rode to T——n, where the minister was slowly recovering from a violent fit of the palsy, with which he was struck immediately after he had been preaching a virulent sermon against the Methodists. 4. The case of Mr. W——n was dreadful indeed, and too notorious to be denied. 5. One of the chief of those who came to make the disturbance on the first instant, hanged himself. 6. I was quite surprised when I heard Mr. R. preach: that soft, smooth, tuneful voice, which he so often employed to blaspheme the work of God, was lost, without hope of recovery. 7. Mr. C. spoke so much in favour of the rioters, that they were all discharged. A few days after, walking over the same field, he dropped down, and spoke no more.' p. 145--147.

And what is the utmost that can be inferred from all these passages? That I *believe* these things to have been judgments. What if I did? To *believe* things are judgments is one thing; to *claim* a power of inflicting judgments, is another. If indeed I *believe* things to be judg-

ments which are not, I am to blame. But still this is not "claiming any miraculous gift."

But "you cite one who forbid your speaking to some dying criminals, to answer for their souls at the judgment-seat of Christ." (p. 147.) I do: but be this right or wrong, it is not "claiming a power to inflict judgments."

"Yes it is; for these judgments are fulminated with the air of one who had the divine vengeance at his disposal." (ibid.) I think not: and I believe all impartial men will be of the same mind.

"These are some of the *extraordinary gifts* which Mr. W. claims," (p. 149.) I claim no *extraordinary gift* at all. Nor has any thing to the contrary been proved yet, so much as in a single instance.

"We come now to the application of this sovereign test, James iii. 17." But let us see that we understand it first. I beg leave to consider the whole. *Who is a wise and knowing man among you? Let him shew his wisdom*, as well as his faith, by *his works* not by words only. *But if ye have bitter zeal and strife in your heart, do not glory and lie against the truth*: as if any such zeal, any thing contrary to love, could consist with true wisdom. *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where bitter zeal and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom which is from above*, (which every one that hath is a real Christian, and he only,) *is first pure*, free from all that is earthly, sensual, devilish; *then peaceable*, benign, loving, making peace; *gentle*, soft, mild, yielding, not morose, or sour; *easy to be entreated*, to be persuaded or convinced, not stubborn, self-willed, or self-conceited; *full of mercy*, of tenderness and compassion; *and good fruits*, both in the heart and life. Two of these are immediately specified, *without partiality*, loving and doing good to all, without respect of persons, *and without hypocrisy*, sincere, frank, open.

I desire to be tried by this test. I try myself by it continually: not indeed whether I am a *prophet*, (for it has nothing to do with this,) but whether I am a *Christian*.

I. The present question then is, (not what is Mr. Law, or what are the Moravians, but) what is John Wesley? And, 1. Is he *pure* or not? "Not pure: for he separates reason from grace." (p. 156.) A wonderful proof! But I deny the fact. I never did separate reason from grace. "Yes, you do. For your own words are, the points we chiefly insisted on were four. 1. That *orthodoxy*, or *right opinion*, is at best but a very slender part of religion; if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all." p. 157.

After premising, that it is our bounden duty to labour after a *right judgment* in all things, as a *wrong judgment* naturally leads to wrong *practice*: I say again, *right opinion* is at best but a very *slender part* of religion, (which properly and directly consists in right tempers, words, and actions,) and frequently it is *no part* of religion. For it may be, where there is no religion at all: in men of the most abandoned lives: yea, in the devil himself.

And yet this does not prove, that I "separate reason from grace," that I "discard reason from the service of religion." I do continually "employ it to distinguish between right and wrong opinions." I never affirmed, "this distinction to be of little consequence," or denied, "the gospel to be *a reasonable service*." p. 158.

But "the apostle Paul considered *right opinion*, as a full third part, at least, of religion. For he says, 'the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' By *goodness* is meant the conduct of particulars to the whole, and consists in habits and social virtue, and this refers to *Christian practice*. By *righteousness* is meant the conduct of the whole to particulars, and consists in the gentle use of church authority. And this refers to *Christian discipline*. By *truth* is meant the conduct of the whole, and of particulars to one another, and consist in *orthodoxy* or *right opinion*; and this refers to *Christian doctrine*," p. 159.

My objections to this account are, 1. It contradicts St. Paul. 2. It contradicts itself.

First, It contradicts St. Paul. It fixes a meaning upon

his words, foreign both to the text and context. The plain sense of the text taken in connexion with the context, is no other than this. *The fruit of the Spirit*, (Eph. v. 9.) (rather *of the light*, which Bengelius proves to be the true reading,) opposite to *the unfruitful works of darkness*, mentioned (v. 11.;) it consists *in all goodness, kindness, tenderheartedness*, (chap. iv. 32;) opposite to *bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil-speaking*, (v. 31;) *in all righteousness*, rendering unto all their dues; opposite to *stealing*, (v. 28;) *and in all truth*, veracity, sincerity, opposite to *lying*. (v. 25.)

Secondly, That interpretation contradicts itself: and that in every article. For, 1. If by *goodness* be meant the conduct of "particulars to the whole," then it does not consist in habits of "social virtue." For "social virtue" regulates the conduct of particulars, not so properly to the whole as to each other. 2. If by *righteousness* be meant the conduct of "the whole to particulars," then it cannot consist in the gentleness of church-authority; unless church governors are the whole church, or the parliament the whole nation. 3. If by *truth* be meant, the conduct of the whole, and of particulars to one another, then it cannot possibly consist in "orthodoxy or right opinion." For *opinion*, right or wrong, is not conduct. They differ *toto genere*. If then it be *orthodoxy*, it is not "the conduct of the governors and governed toward each other. If it be their *conduct* toward each other, it is not *orthodoxy*."

Although, therefore, it be allowed, that right opinions are a great help, and wrong opinions a great hindrance to religion, yet till stronger proof be brought against it, that proposition remains unshaken, "right opinions are a slender part of religion, if any part of it at all." p. 160.

As to the affair of the Abbe Paris, whoever will read over, with calmness and impartiality, but one volume of Monsieur Montgeron, will then be a competent judge. Mean time I would just observe, that if these miracles were real, they strike at the root of the whole papal autho-

thority; as having been wrought in direct opposition to the famous Bull *Unigenitus*, p. 161.

Yet I do not say, "Errors in faith have little to do with religion;" or that they "are no let or impediment to the Holy Spirit." (p. 162.) But still it is true. that "God (generally speaking) begins his work at the heart." (ibid.) Men usually feel *desires* to please God, before they know how to please him. Their *heart* says, "What must I do to be saved?" before they *understand* the way of salvation.

But see "the character he gives his own saints!" 'The more I converse with this people the more I am amazed. That God hath wrought a great work is manifest, (by saving many sinners from their sins.) And yet the "main of them are not able to give a rational account of the plainest principles of religion.' They were not able then, as there had not been time to instruct them. But the case is far different *now*.

Again, did I "give this character" even then, of the people called Methodists, in *general?* No, but of the people of a *particular* town in Ireland, where nine in ten of the inhabitants are Romanists.

"Nor is the observation confined to the people. He had made a proselyte of Mr. D. vicar of B. And to shew he was no discredit to his master, he gives him this character; 'He seemed to stagger at nothing, though as yet his understanding is not opened." p. 162.

Mr. D. was never a proselyte of mine; nor did I ever see him before or since. I endeavoured to shew him, that we 'are justified by faith.' And he did not object; though neither did he understand.

"But in the first propagation of religion, God began with the understanding, and rational conviction won the heart." (p. 163.) Frequently, but not always. The jailer's *heart* was touched first, then he *understood* what he 'must do to be saved.' In this respect then there is nothing *new* in the present work of God. So the lively story from Moliere is just nothing to the purpose.

In drawing the parallel between the work God has wrought in England and in America, I do not so much as "insinuate, that the understanding has nothing to do in the work." (p. 165.) Whoever is engaged therein will find full employment for all the understanding which God has given him.

"On the whole, therefore, we conclude, that wisdom which divests the Christian faith of its truth, and the test of it, reason—and resolves all religion into spiritual mysticism and ecstatic raptures, cannot be the wisdom from above, whose characteristic is purity." p. 166.

Perhaps so, but *I* do not "divest faith, either of truth or reason; much less do I resolve all into spiritual mysticism and ecstatic raptures." Therefore, suppose *purity* here meant *sound doctrine*, (which it no more means than it does a sound constitution,) still it touches not *me*, who for any thing that has yet been said, may teach the *soundest doctrine* in the world.

2. "Our next business is to apply the other marks to these pretending sectaries. The first of these, purity, respects the nature of 'the wisdom from above,' or in other words, the doctrine taught," (p. 167.) Not in the least. It has no more to do with doctrine, than the whole text has with prophets. "All the rest concern the manner of teaching." Neither can this be allowed. They no farther concern either teaching or teachers, than they concern all mankind.

But to proceed. "Methodism signifies only the manner of preaching; not either an *old* or a *new* religion; it is the manner in which Mr. W. and his followers attempt to propagate the plain old religion." (p. 168.) And is not this sound doctrine? Is this spiritual mysticism and ecstatic raptures?

"Of all men, Mr. W. should best know the meaning of the term; since it was not a *nick-name* imposed on the sect by its enemies, but an appellation of honour bestowed upon

it by themselves." In answer to this, I need only transcribe what was published twenty years ago.*

'Since the name first came abroad into the world, many have been at a loss to know what a Methodist is; what are the principles and practice of those who are commonly called by that name; and what are the distinguishing marks of the sect, 'which is every where spoken against.'

'And it being generally believed that I was able to give the clearest account of these things, (as having been one of the first to whom the name was given, and the person by whom the rest were supposed to be directed,) I have been called upon in all manner of ways, and with the utmost earnestness so to do. I yield at last to the continual importunity, both of friends and enemies; and do now give the clearest account I can, in the presence of the Lord, the Judge of heaven and earth, of the principles and practice whereby those who are called Methodists are distinguished from other men.

'I say, those who are called Methodists; for let it be well observed, that this is not a name which they take upon themselves, but one fixed on them by way of reproach, without their approbation or consent. It was first given to three or four young men at Oxford, by a student of Christ's Church; either in allusion to the ancient sect of physicians so called, (from their teaching, that almost all diseases might be cured by a specific method of diet and exercise) or from their observing a more regular method of study and behaviour than was usual with those of their age and station.'

I need only add, that this nick-name was imposed upon us before this manner of preaching had a being. Yea, at a time when I thought it as lawful to cut a throat as to preach out of a church.

"Why then will Mr. W. so grossly misrepresent his adversaries, as to say, that when they speak against Metho-

* Preface to The Character of a Methodist.

dism, they speak against the plain, old doctrine of the Church of England?" (ibid.) This is no misrepresentation. Many of our adversaries, all over the kingdom, speak against us, *eo nomine*, for preaching these doctrines, justification by faith in particular.

However, "a fanatic manner of preaching, though it were the doctrine of an apostle, may do more harm to society at least, than reviving old heresies, or inventing new. It tends to bewilder the imaginations of some, to inflame the passions of others, and to spread disorder and confusion through the whole community." (p. 169.) I would gladly have the term defined. What is "a fanatic manner of preaching?" Is it field-preaching? But this has no such effect, even among the wildest of men. This has not "bewildered the imagination," even of the Kingswood colliers, or "inflamed their passions." It has not spread disorder or confusion among them, but just the contrary. From the time it was heard in that chaos,

Confusion heard the voice, and wild uproar,
Stood rul'd, and order from disorder sprung.

"But St. James, who delivers the test for the trial of these men's pretensions,"—(the same mistake still) "unquestionably thought a fanatic spirit did more mischief in the mode of teaching than in the matter taught: since of six marks, one only concerns doctrine, all the rest the manners of the teacher." (p. 170.) Nay, all six concern doctrine as much as one. The truth is, they have nothing to do either with doctrine or manner.

"From St. Paul's words, 'Be instant, in season, out of season,' he infers more than they will bear; and misapplies them into the bargain." (p. 171.) When and where? I do not remember applying them at all.

"When seasonable times are appointed for holy offices, to fly to unseasonable, is factious." (p. 172.) But it is not clear, that five in the morning and seven in the evening (our usual times) are unseasonable.

We come now directly to the second article. "'The wisdom from above is peaceable.' But the propagation of

Methodism has occasioned many and great violations of peace. (p. 173.) In order to know where the blame hereof lies, let us inquire into the temper which makes for peace. For we may be assured the fault lies not there, where such a temper is found." Thus far we are quite agreed. "Now the temper which makes for peace is prudence." This is *one* of the tempers which make for peace; others are kindness, meekness, patience. "This our Lord recommended by his own example. (p. 174--177.) But this Mr. W. calls 'the mystery of iniquity, and the offspring of hell.'" (p. 178.) No, not this: not the prudence which our Lord recommends. I call that so, and that only, which the world, the men who know not God, style Christian prudence. By this I mean subtility, craft, dissimulation; study to please man rather than God; the art of trimming between God and the world, of serving God and mammon. Will any serious man defend this? And *this* only do I condemn.

"But you say, 'good sort of men, as they are called, are the bane of all religion.'" (p. 179, 180.) And I think so. By this good sort of men, I mean, persons who have a liking to, but no sense of religion: no real fear or love of God; no truly Christian tempers. "These steal away the little zeal he has, that is, persuade him to be peaceable." No; persuade him to be like themselves; without love either to God or man.

"Again, speaking of one, he says, 'Indulging himself in harmless company,' (vulgarly so called,) 'He first made shipwreck of his zeal, then of his faith.' In this I think he is right. The zeal and faith of a fanatic are such exact tallies, that neither can exist alone. They came into the world together, to disturb society and dishonour religion."

By zeal I mean the flame of love, or fervent love to God and man; by faith the substance or confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Is this the zeal and faith of a fanatic? Then St. Paul was the greatest fanatic on earth. Did these come into the world to disturb society and dishonour religion?

"On the whole, we find Mr. W. by his own confession,

entirely destitute of prudence. (p. 181.) Therefore it must be ascribed to the want of this, if his preaching be attended with tumult and disorder." By "his own confession?" Surely no. This I confess, and this only: what is falsely called prudence, I abhor: but true prudence I love and admire.

However, "you set at nought the discipline of the church, by invading the province of the parochial minister." (p. 182.) Nay, if ever I preach at all, it must be in the province of some parochial minister: "by assembling in undue places, and at unfit times." I know of no times unfit for those who assemble. And I believe Hanham Mount and Rosegreen were the most proper places under heaven for preaching to the colliers in Kingswood: "by scurrilous invectives against the governors and pastors of the national church." This is an entire mistake. I dare not make any "scurrilous invectives" against any man. "Insolencies of this nature provoke warm men to tumult." But these "insolencies" do not exist. So that whatever tumult either warm or cold men raise, I am not chargeable therewith.

"To know the true character of Methodism." The present point is, to know the true character of John Wesley. Now in order to know this, we need not enquire what others were, before he was born. All, therefore, that follows, (p. 184--186,) of old Precisians, Puritans, and Independents, may stand just as it is.

But "Mr. W. wanted to be persecuted." (p. 187.) As this is averred over and over, I will explain myself upon it, once for all. I never desired, or *wanted* to be persecuted.

Lives there who loves his pain?

I love, and desire to 'live peaceably with all men.' "But persecution would not come at his call." However, it came uncalled: and more than once or twice, it was not "mock persecution." It was not only the huzzas of the mob: showers of stones are something more than huzzas. And whosoever saw the mob either at Walsal or Cork, (to

instance in no more,) saw that they were not "in jest," but in great earnest, eagerly athirst, not for sport, (as you suppose) but for blood.

But though I do not desire persecution, I expect it. I must, if I believe St. Paul; 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution,' 2 Tim. iii. 12: either sooner or later, more or less, according to the wise providence of God. But I believe, 'all' these 'things work together for good, to them that love God.' And from a conviction of this, they may even 'rejoice,' when they are 'persecuted for righteousnes's sake.'

Yet as I seldom "complain of ill treatment," so I am never "dissatisfied with good." (p. 188.) But I often wonder at it. And I once expressed my wonder, nearly in the words of the old Athenian, "What have we done, that the world should be so civil to us?"

You conclude the head, "As he who persecutes, is but the tool of him that invites persecution," (I know not who does,) "the crime finally comes home to him who sets the rioter at work." (p. 191.) And is this all the proof, that I am not peaceable? Then let all men judge, if the charge be made good.

3. "The next mark of the celestial wisdom is, it is 'gentle and easy to be entreated;' compliant and even obsequious to all men." And how does it appear, that I am wanting in this? Why, he is "a severe condemner of his fellow citizens, and a severe exactor of conformity to his own observances." Now the proof. 1. "He tells us this in the very appellation he assumes." (p. 192.) Nay, I never assumed it at all. 2. But "you say, useless conversation is an abomination to the Lord. And what is this, but to withstand St. Paul to the face?" Why, did St. Paul join in, or commend useless conversation? I rather think, he reproves it. He condemns as σαπρος λογος, *putrid, stinking* conversation, all that is not good, all that is not 'to the use of edifying,' and meet to 'minister grace to the hearers,' Eph. iv. 29. 3. "Mr. W. 'resolved, never to laugh, nor to speak a tittle of worldly things,—though others may, nay must.'"

Pray add that, which was the reason of my so resolving, namely, that I expected to die in a few days. If I expected it now, probably, I should resume the resolution. But be it as it may, this proves nothing against my being both *gentle* and *easy to be entreated.* 4. "He says Mr. G. was a clumsy, overgrown, hardfaced man," (p. 194.) So he was. And this was the best of him. I spare him much in saying no more. But he is gone. Let his ashes rest. 5. "I heard a most miserable sermon, full of dull, senseless, improbable lies." It was so, from the beginning to the end. I have seldom heard the like. 6. "The persecution at St. Ives" (which ended before I came; what I saw I do not term *persecution*) "was owing to the indefatigable labours of Mr. H. and Mr. S., gentlemen worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance. Here he tells us, it is his purpose to gibbet up the names of his two great persecutors to everlasting infamy," (p. 195.) These gentlemen had occasioned several innocent people, to be turned out of their livelihood; and others to be outraged in the most shocking manner, and beat only not to death. My purpose is, by setting down their names, to make others afraid so to offend. Yet I say still, "God forbid that I should *rail*, either at a Turk, infidel, or heretic." But I will bring to light the actions of such Christians, to be a warning to others. And all this I judge to be perfectly consistent with "the spirit of *meekness*," p. 196.

4. "The fourth mark is, Full of mercy and good fruits. Let us inquire into the mercy and good fruits of Mr. W." (p. 198.)

1. And, first, "He has no mercy on his opposers. They pass with him under no other title, than that of the devil's servants, and the devil's children," (ibid.) This is far from true. Many have opposed, and do oppose me still, whom I believe to be the children and servants of God. "We have seen him despatching the principal of these children of the devil, without mercy, to their father," (p. 199.) No, not one. This has been *affirmed* over and over, but never proved yet. I "fling about no exterminating judgments of God;" I "call down no fire from heaven:" "But it

would be for the credit of those new saints, to distinguish between rage and zeal." That is easily done. *Rage* is furious fire from hell; *zeal* is loving fire from heaven. 2. "If what has been said above does not suffice, turn again to Mr. W.'s Journals. Mr. S. while he was speaking to the society against my brother and me, was struck raving mad," (p. 200.) He was so, before a hundred witnesses; though I was *the last* to believe it. "But it seems, God is at length entreated for him, and has restored him to a sound mind." And is my *relating* this *fact*, an instance of "*dooming* men to *perdition*?" 3. "John Haydon cried aloud, Let the world see the judgment of God," (p. 201.) He did. But let John Haydon look to that. It was he said so, not I. 4. "I was informed of an *awful providence*. A poor wretch, who was here the last week, cursing, and blaspheming, and labouring with all his might to hinder the word of God, had afterwards boasted, he would come again on Sunday, and no man should stop his mouth then. But on Friday God laid his hand upon him, and on Sunday he was buried," (p. 202.) And was not this an awful providence? But yet I do not "doom even him to perdition." 5. "I saw a poor man, once joined with us, who wanted nothing in this world. A day or two before he hanged himself, but was cut down before he was dead. He has been crying out ever since, "God had left him, because he had left the children of God." This was *his* assertion, not *mine*. I neither affirm nor deny it. 6. The true account of Lucy Godshall is this. "I buried the body of Lucy Godshall. After pressing towards the mark for more than two years, since she had known the pardoning love of God; she was for some time weary and faint in her mind, till I put her out of the bands. God blessed this greatly to her soul, so that, in a short time, she was admitted again. Soon after, being at home, she felt the love of God in an unusual manner poured into her heart. She fell down upon her knees, and delivered up her soul and body into the hands of God. In the instant the use of all her limbs was taken away, and she was in a burning fever. For three days she mightily praised God, and rejoiced in him all the day long.

She then cried out, Now Satan hath desired to have me, that he may sift me as wheat. Immediately darkness and heaviness fell upon her, which continued till Saturday the fourth instant. On Sunday the light shone again upon her heart. About ten in the evening, one said to her, 'Jesus is ready to receive your soul.' She said, Amen! Amen! closed her eyes, and died," Is this brought as a proof of my *inexorableness!* Or of my "dooming men to perdition?"

7. "I found Nicholas Palmer in great weakness of body, and heaviness of spirit. We wrestled with God in his behalf; and our labour was not in vain. His soul was comforted; and a few hours after he quietly fell asleep." A strange proof this likewise, either of *inexorableness*, or of "dooming men to perdition!" Therefore this charge, too, stands totally unsupported. Here is no proof of my *unmercifulness* yet.

"Good fruits come next to be considered, which Mr. Wesley's idea of true religion does not promise. He saith," (I will repeat the words a little at large, that their true sense may more clearly appear:) "in explaining those words, *the kingdom of God*, or true religion, *is not meats and drinks*, I was led to shew, that religion does not properly consist in harmlessness, using the means of grace, and doing good, that is, helping our neighbours, chiefly by giving alms: but that a man might both be harmless, use the means of grace, and do much good, and yet have no true religion at all," (p. 203.) He may so. Yet whoever has true religion, must be 'zealous of good works.' And zeal for all good works, is, according to *my* idea, an essential ingredient of true religion.

"Spiritual cures are all the good fruits he pretends to," (p. 204, 205.) Not quite all, says William Kirkman, with some others. "A few of his spiritual cures we will set in a fair light. The first time I preached at Swalwell," (chiefly to colliers and workers in the iron work,) "none seemed to be much convinced, only stunned:" I mean *amazed* at what they heard, though they were the first principles of religion. "But he brings them to their

senses with a vengeance." No, not *them*. These were different persons. Are they lumped together, in order to set things in a *fair light?* The whole paragraph runs thus. 'I carefully examined those who had lately cried out in the congregation. Some of these, I found, could give no account at all, how or wherefore they had done so: only that of a sudden, they dropped down, they knew not how: and what they afterward said or did, they knew not. Others could just remember, they were in fear, but could not tell what they were in fear of. Several said they were afraid of the devil: and this was all they knew. But a few gave a more intelligible account of the piercing sense they then had of their sins, both inward and outward, which were set in array against them, round about: of the dread they were in of the wrath of God, and the punishment they had deserved, into which they seemed to be just falling, without any way to escape. One of them told me, "I was as if I was just falling down from the highest place I had ever seen. I thought the devil was pushing me off, and that God had forsaken me." Another said, "I felt the very fire of hell already kindled in my breast: and all my body was in as much pain, as if I had been in a burning fiery furnace." What wisdom is this, which rebuketh these, *that they should hold their peace?* Nay, let such a one cry after *Jesus of Nazareth*, till he saith, *Thy faith hath made thee whole.*'

Now follow the proofs of my driving men mad. 1. "Another of Dr. Monro's patients came to ask my advice. I found no reason to believe she had been any otherwise mad, than every one is, that is deeply convinced of sin," (p. 208.) Let this prove all that it can prove. 2. "A middle aged woman was really distracted:" Yes, before I ever saw her, or she me. 3. "I could not but be under some concern with regard to one or two persons, who were tormented in an unaccountable manner, and seemed to be indeed lunatic as well as sore vexed." True; for a time. But the deliverance of one of them is related in the very next paragraph. 4. "Two or three are gone quite distracted: that is, they mourn and refuse to be comforted till they have re-

demption," (p. 209.) 5. "I desired one to visit Mrs. G. in Bedlam, put in by her husband as a mad woman." But she never was mad in any degree, as he himself afterwards acknowledged. 6. "One was so deeply convinced of her ungodliness, that she cried out day and night, Lord, save, or I perish! All the neighbours agreed she was stark mad." But I did not make her so. For this was before she ever saw my face. Now let any one judge, whether here is yet a single proof, that I drive men mad.

"The time when this spiritual madness was at its height, he calls a glorious time," (p. 210.) I call that a glorious time when many notorious sinners are converted to God; (whether with any outward symptoms or none; for those are no way essential:) and when many are in the *triumph of faith*, greatly *rejoicing* in God their *Saviour*.

"But though Mr. Wesley does so well in turning fools into madmen, yet his craftsmaster is certainly one Mr. Wheatley, of whom he gives this extraordinary account.

"A poor woman (on Wed. 17th Sept. 1740) said, it was four years (namely, in Sept. 1736, above a year before I left Georgia) since her son, by hearing a sermon of Mr. Wheatley's, fell into great uneasiness. She thought he was ill, and would have sent for a physician. But he said, "No, no; send for Mr. Wheatley." He was sent for, and came; and after asking a few questions, told her, "The boy is mad. Get a coach, and carry him to Dr. Monro. Use my name. I have sent several such to him. Who this Mr. Wheatley is, I know not," (p. 211.) He was lecturer at Spitalfields church. The event was, after the apothecary had half murdered him he was discharged, and the lad soon recovered his strength. His senses he never had lost. The supposing this, was a blunder from the beginning.

"These are the exploits which Mr. W. calls blessings from God," (p. 212.) (Certainly I do, both *repentance* and *faith.)* "And which therefore we may call the good fruits of his ministry." (May God increase them a hundred fold!) "What the apostle calls good fruits, namely, doing

much good, Mr. W. tells us, belongs not to true religion." I never told any man so yet. I tell all men just the contrary.

I may then safely leave all mankind to judge, whether a single article of the charge against me has yet been made good. So much for the first charge, that I am a *madman*. Now for the second, that I am a *knave*.

5. The proof is short: "Every enthusiast is a knave: but he is an enthusiast. Therefore he is a knave." I deny both the first and second proposition. Nay, the first is proved thus: "Enthusiasm must always be accompanied with craft and knavery," (p. 213.) It *often* is so, but not *always*; for there may be *honest enthusiasts*. Therefore the whole account of that *odd combination* which follows is ingenious, (p. 214—218,) but proves nothing.

Yet I must touch upon one or two parts of it. "An enthusiast thinks he is dispensed with in breaking, nay, that he is authorised to break the common laws of morality." Does every enthusiast? Then I am none: for I never thought any such thing. I believe no man living is authorised to break, or is dispensed with in breaking any law of morality. I know, whoever (habitually) breaks one of the least of these, *shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven*.

"Can any but an enthusiast believe, that he may use guile to promote the glory of God?" Yes, ten thousand that are no enthusiasts, firmly believe this. How few do we find that do not believe it? That do not plead for *officious lies*? How few will subscribe to St. Augustine's declaration, (to which I assent with my whole heart,) 'I would not tell a wilful lie, to save the souls of the whole world.'

But to return, "The wisdom from above is without partiality and without hypocrisy. Partiality consists in dispensing an unequal measure in our transactions with others: hypocrisy, in attempting to cover that unequal measure by prevarication and false pretences." The former of these definitions is not clear; the latter, neither clear, nor adequate to the defined.

But let this pass. My partiality is now the point. What are the proofs of it? 1. "His followers are always the children of God, his opposers the children of the devil," (p. 220.) Neither so, nor so. I never affirmed either one or the other universally. That some of the former are children of God, and some of the latter children of the devil, I believe. But what will this prove?

"His followers are directed by inward feelings, the impulses of an inflamed fancy:" (no more than they are directed by the Coran) "his opposers, by the Scripture." What! while they are cursing, swearing, blaspheming; beating and maiming men that have done them no wrong, and treating women in a manner too shocking to be repeated? 2. The next proof is very extraordinary. My words are, 'I was with two persons, who, I doubt, are properly enthusiasts: for, first, they think to attain the end without the means, which is enthusiasm properly so called. Again, they think themselves inspired of God, and are not. But also, imaginary inspiration is enthusiasm. That theirs is only imaginary inspiration appears hence, it contradicts *the law and the testimony*,' p. 221.

Now, by what art of man can this be made a proof of my *partiality*? Why thus: "These are wise words. But what do they amount to? Only to this: that these two persons would not take out their patents of inspiration from his office." But what proof is there of this round assertion? Truly, none at all.

Full as extraordinary is the third proof of my partiality. "Miss Gr. told Mrs. Sp., Mr. W. was a Papist. Upon this Miss Gr. is anathematised. And we are told, that in consequence, she had lately been raving mad, and as such was tied down in her bed. Yet all these circumstances of madness have befallen his favourite saints, whom he has vindicated from the opprobium," p. 222.

The passage in my Journal stands thus: 'Mrs. Spa—— told me, two or three nights since, Miss Gr. met me, and said, I assure you, Mr. Wesley is a Papist. Perhaps I need observe no more upon this, than that Miss Gr. had lately

been raving mad, in consequence of a *fever*; (not of an *anathema*, which never had any being,) that as such she was tied down in her bed; and as soon as she was suffered to go abroad, went to Mr. Whitefield, to inquire of him whether *she* was not a Papist. But he quickly perceived, she was only a lunatic, the nature of her disorder soon betraying itself." Certainly then my allowing *her* to be mad is no proof of my partiality. I will allow every one to be so, who is attended with "all these circumstances of madness."

4. "He pronounces sentence of enthusiasm upon another, and tells us wherefore, without any disguise. Here I took leave of a poor, mad, original enthusiast, who had been scattering lies in every quarter." It was the famous John Adams, since confined at Box, whose capital lie, the source of the rest was, that he was a prophet, greater than Moses, or any of the apostles. And is the pronouncing him a madman, a proof of my *partiality?*

5. "I had much conversation with Mr. Simpson, an original enthusiast. I desired him in the evening to give an exhortation. He did so, and spoke many good things, in a manner peculiar to himself," (without order or connexion, head or tail; and in a language very near as mystical as that of Jacob Behmen.) "When he had done, I summed up what he had said, methodizing and explaining it. O what pity it is, this well-meaning man should ever speak without an interpreter," p. 223.

Let this passage likewise stand as it is, and who can guess how it is to prove my *partiality?* But by a slight of hand, the thing is done. "How differently does Mr. Wesley treat these two enthusiasts! The first is accused of spreading lies of his Master:" (No, he never was any disciple of mine.) "On which Mr. W. took his leave of him; a gentle expression, to signify the thrusting him out head and shoulders, from the society of saints." It signifies neither, more nor less, than that I went out of the room and left him. "The other's enthusiasm is made to consist only in want of method." No. His enthusiasm did not *consist*

in this. It was the cause of it. But he was quite another man than John Adams: and, I believe, a right honest man.

6. "I was both surprised and grieved at a genuine instance of enthusiasm. I. B., who had received a sense of the love of God a few days before, came riding through the town, hollowing, and shouting, and driving all the people before him, telling them, 'God had told him, he should be a king, and should tread all his enemies under his feet.' I sent him home immediately to his work, and advised him to cry day and night to God that he might be lowly in heart, lest Satan should again *get an advantage over him.*"

What this proves, or is intended to prove, I cannot tell. Certainly, neither this, nor any of the preceding passages, prove the point now in question, my *partiality*. So this likewise is wholly unproved still.

"We shall end, where every frantic leader ends, with his hypocrisy," (p. 227.) Five arguments are brought in proof of this. I shall take them in their order. 1. "After having heaped up miracles one upon another, he sneaks away under the protection of a puny wonder. 'About five I began near the keelman's hospital, many thousands standing round. The wind was high just before, but scarcely a breath was felt all the time we assembled before God. I praise God for this also. Is it enthusiasm, to see God in every benefit we receive?' It is not; the enthusiasm consists in believing those benefits to be conferred, through a change in the established course of nature. But here he insinuates, that he meant no more by his miracles, than the seeing God in every benefit we receive," (p. 228, 229.) That sudden and total ceasing of the wind, I impute to the *particular providence of God.* This I mean by *seeing God* therein. But this I knew many would count *enthusiasm.* In guarding against it, I had an eye to that single incident, and no other. Nor did I *insinuate* any thing more than I expressed, in as plain a manner as I could.

A little digression follows. "A friend of his advises, not to establish the power of working miracles, as the great criterion of a divine mission: seeing the agreement of doctrines with Scripture, is the only infallible rule;" (p. 230.) "But Christ himself establishes the power of working miracles, as the great criterion of a divine mission;" (p. 231.) True, of a mission to be the Saviour of the world: to put a period to the Jewish, and introduce the Christian dispensation. And whoever pretends to such a mission, will stand in such need of such credentials.

2. "He shifts and doubles no less" (neither less nor more) "as to the ecstacies of his saints. Sometimes they are of God, sometimes of the devil; but he is constant in this, that natural causes have no hand in them." This is not true. In what are here termed *ecstacies*, strong joy or grief, attended with various bodily symptoms, I have openly affirmed again and again, that *natural causes* have a part. Nor did I ever shift or double on the head. I have steadily and uniformly maintained, that if the mind be affected to such a degree, the body must be affected by the laws of the vital union. The mind I believe was, in many of those cases, affected by the Spirit of God, in others by the devil, and in some by both: and in consequence of this, the body was affected also. 3. "Mr. Wesley says, I fear we have grieved the Spirit of the jealous God, by questioning his work, and by blaspheming it, by imputing it to nature, or even to the devil," (p. 232, 233.) True; by imputing the conviction and conversion of sinners, which is the work of God alone, (because of these unusual circumstances attending it,) either to nature or to the devil. This is flat and plain. No *prevarication* yet. Let us attend to the next proof of it. "Innumerable cautions were given me, not to regard visions or dreams, or to fancy people had remission of sins, because of their cries, or tears, or outward professions. The sum of my answer was, You deny that God does now work these effects; at least, that he works them in this manner. I affirm both. I have seen very many persons changed in a moment from a spirit of fear,

horror, despair, to a spirit of love, joy, peace.—What I have to say, touching visions and dreams, is this: I know several persons in whom this great change was wrought in a dream, or during a strong representation to the eye of their mind, of Christ, either on the cross, or in glory. This is the fact. Let any judge of it as they please. And that such a change was then wrought, appears (not from their shedding tears only, or falling into fits, or crying out: these are not the fruits, as you seem to suppose, whereby I judge, but) from the whole tenor of their life, till then many ways wicked, from that time holy, and just, and good." "Nay, he is so convinced of its being the work of God, that the horrid blasphemies which ensued, he ascribes to the abundance of joy which God had given to a poor, mad woman," (p. 234.) Do I ascribe those *blasphemies* to her *joy in God?* No; but to her *pride*. My words are, 'I met with one, who, having been *lifted up* with the abundance of joy which God had given her, had fallen into such blasphemies and vain imaginations, as are not common to men. In the afternoon I found another instance, nearly I fear, of the same kind: one who set her *private revelations*, so called, on the self-same foot with the written word," p. 235.

But how is this to prove *prevarication?* "Why, on a sudden, he directly revokes all he had advanced. He says, 'I told them, they were not to judge of the spirit whereby any one spoke, either by appearances, or by common report, or by their own inward feelings. No, nor by any dreams, visions, or revelations, supposed to be made to the soul, any more than by their tears, or any involuntary effects wrought upon their bodies. I warned them, that all these things were in themselves of a doubtful, disputable nature. They might be from God, or they might not; and were therefore not simply to be relied on, any more than simply to be condemned, but to be tried by a farther rule, to be brought to the only certain test, the law and the testimony." "Now is not this a formal recantation of what he had said just above?" (p. 335.) Nothing less, as I will shew in two

minutes, to every calm, impartial man. What I say now, I have said any time these thirty years: I have never varied therefrom for an hour. 'Every thing disputable is to be brought to the only certain test, the law and the testimony.' "But did not you talk just now of visions and dreams?" Yes; but not as of a *test* of any thing; only as a *channel* through which God is sometimes pleased to convey 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance,' the indisputable *fruit* of his Spirit. And these, we may observe, wherever they exist, must be *inwardly felt*. Now, where is the *prevarication*? Where the *formal recantation*? They are vanished into air.

But here is more proof: "At length he gives up all these divine agitations to the devil, (p. 236.) I inquired, says he, into the case of those who had lately cried out aloud during the preaching. I found this had come upon every one of them in a moment, without any previous notice. In that moment they dropped down, lost all their strength, and were seized with violent pain. Some said they felt as if a sword were running through them: others as if their whole body were tearing in pieces. These symptoms I can no more impute to any natural cause, than to the Spirit of God. I make no doubt but it was Satan tearing them as they were coming to Christ," p. 237.

"Now these were the *very symptoms* which he had before ascribed to the Spirit of God." Never in my life. Indeed some of them I never met with before. Those outward *symptoms* which I had met with before, bodily agitations in particular, I did not ascribe to the Spirit of God, but to the *natural union* of the soul and body. And those symptoms which I now ascribe to the devil, I never ascribed to any other cause. The second proof of my *prevarication* or *hypocrisy* is therefore just as conclusive as the first.

3. Now for the third. "Mr. W. before spoke contemptuously of orthodoxy, to take in the sectaries. But when he would take off churchmen, then orthodoxy is the *unum necessarium*." Did I ever say so? No more than (in the other extreme) *speak contemptuously* of it. "Yes, you say,

I described the plain, old religion of the Church of England, which is now almost every where spoken against, under the new name of *Methodism*." Very well: and what shadow of *prevarication* is here? May I not still declare the *plain, old religion* of the Church of England, and yet very consistently aver, that *right opinion* is a very slender part of it?

4. The next passage, I am sorry to say, is neither related with seriousness nor truth. "We have seen him inviting persecution." Never: though I "rejoiced" in the instance alleged, at having an opportunity of calling a multitude of the most abandoned sinners to repentance. What is peculiarly unfair is, the lame, false account is palmed upon us, by "so he himself tells the story." I must therefore tell the story once more, in as few words as I can.

Sunday, Aug. 7, 1737, I repelled Mrs. W. from the communion. Tuesday 9, I was required by Mr. Bailiff Parker to appear at the next court. Thursday 11, Mr. Causton, her uncle, said to me, "Give your reasons for repelling her before the whole congregation." I answered, 'Sir, if you insist upon it, I will.' But I heard no more of it. Afterward he said (but not to *me*) "Mr. W. had repelled Sophy out of revenge, because he had made proposals of marriage to her which she rejected." Tuesday 16, Mrs. W. made affidavit of it. Thursday, Sept. 1, a Grand Jury, prepared by Mr. Causton, found, that "John Wesley had broken the laws of the realm, by speaking and writing to Mrs. W. against her husband's consent, and by repelling her from the communion."

Friday 2, was the third court day at which I appeared since my being required so to do by Mr. Parker. I moved for an immediate hearing; but was put off till the next court day. On the next court day I appeared again, as also at the two courts following; but could not be heard. Thursday, Nov. 3, I appeared in court again; and yet again on Tuesday, Nov. 22, on which day Mr. C. desired to speak with me, and read me an affidavit, in which it was affirmed,

that I "abused Mr. C. in his own house, calling him liar, villain, and so on." It was likewise repeated, that I had been reprimanded at the last court, by Mr. C. as an enemy to, and hinderer of, the public peace.

'My friends agreed with me, that the time we looked for, was now come. And the next morning, calling on Mr. C. I told him, 'I designed to set out for England immediately.'

Friday, Decem. 2, I proposed to set out for Carolina about noon. But about ten, the magistrates sent for me, and told me, "I must not go out of the province: for I had not answered the allegations laid against me." I replied, 'I had appeared at six or seven courts, in order to answer them, but I was not suffered so to do.' After a few more words, I said, 'You use me very ill. And so you do the trustees. You know your business, and I know mine.' In the afternoon, they published an order, forbidding any to assist me in going out of the province. But I knew, I had no more business there. So as evening prayer was over, the tide then serving, I took boat at the Bluff for Carolina.'

This is the plain account of the matter. I need only add a remark or two on the pleasantry of my censurer. "He had recourse as usual, to his revelations. I consulted my friends, whether God did not call me to England," (p. 242.) Not by revelations: these were out of the question; but by clear, strong reasons. "The magistrate soon quickened his pace, by declaring him an enemy to the public peace." No; that senseless assertion of Mr. C. made me go neither sooner or later. "The reader has seen him long languish for persecution." What, before November, 1737? I never *languished* for it either before or since. But I *submit* to what pleases God. "To hide his poltronery in a bravado, he gave public notice of his apostolical intention," (p. 243.) Kind and civil! I may be excused from taking notice of what follows. It is equally serious and genteel.

"Had his longings for persecution been without hypo-

crisy." The same mistake throughout. I never longed or *professed* to long for it at all. But if I had *professed* it ever *since* I returned from Georgia, what was done *before* I returned could not prove *that profession* to be *hypocrisy*. So all this ribaldry serves no end; only to throw *much dirt*, if haply some may stick.

Meantime, how many untruths are here in one page! 1. "He made the path doubly perplexed for his followers. 2. He left them to answer for his crimes. 3. He longed for persecution. 4. He went as far as Georgia for it. 5. The truth of his mission was questioned by the magistrate, and, 6. Decried by the people. 7. For his false morals. 8. The gospel was wounded through the sides of its pretended missionary. 9. The first Christian preachers offered up themselves:" (so did I.) "Instead of this, our paltry mimic," (p. 244.) *Bona verba!* Surely a writer should *reverence himself*, how much soever he *despises* his opponent. So upon the whole, this proof of my *hypocrisy* is as lame as the three former.

5. "We have seen above, how he sets all prudence at defiance." None but *false prudence*. "But he uses a different language when his rivals are to be restrained." No: always the same, both with regard to *false prudence* and *true*.

"But take the affair from the beginning. He began to suspect rivals in the year thirty-nine: for he says, 'Remembering how many that came after me were preferred before me.'" The very next words shew in what sense. They *had attained unto the law of righteousness:* I had not. But what has this to do with *rivals?*

However, go on. "At this time (Dec. 8, 1739,) his opening the bible afforded him but small relief. He sunk so far in his despondency, as to doubt if God would not lay him aside, and send other labourers into his harvest." But this was *another time*. It was June 22. And the occasion of the doubt is expressly mentioned. 'I preached, but had no life or spirit in me, and was much in doubt,' on that account. Not on account of Mr. Whitefield. He did not

'now begin to set up for himself.' We were in full union; nor was there the least shadow of *rivalry* or contention between us. I still sincerely "praise God for his wisdom, in giving different talents to different preachers," (p. 250,) and particularly for his giving Mr. Wh. the talents which I have not.

6. What farther proof of hypocrisy? Why, "he had given innumerable hints of contempt in his Journals against human learning," (p. 252, 253.) Where? I do not know. Let the passages be cited: else let me speak *for it* ever so much, it will prove nothing. "At last he was forced to have recourse to what he had so much scorned, I mean, prudence," (p. 255.) All a mistake. I hope never to have recourse to *false prudence*: and *true prudence* I never scorned.

"He might have met Mr. Wh. half way: but he was too formidable a rival. With a less formidable one he pursues this way. I laboured, says he, to convince Mr. Gr." (my assistant, not *rival*) "that he had not done well, in confuting, as he termed it, the sermon I preached the Sunday before. I asked, will you meet me half way? (the words following put my meaning beyond all dispute.) I will never publickly preach against you. Will not you against me? Here we see a fair invitation to Mr. Gr. to play the hypocrite with him." Not in the least. Each might simply deliver his own sentiments, without preaching against the other. "We conclude that Mr. Wesley, amidst his warmest exclamations against all prudence, still still a succedaneum, which he indeed calls prudence. But its true name is craft," p. 257.

Craft is an essential part of *worldly prudence*. This I detest and abhor. And let him prove it upon me that can. But it must be by better arguments than the foregoing. Truly Christian prudence, such as was recommended by our Lord, and practised by him and his apostles, I reverence and desire to learn, being convinced of its abundant usefulness.

I know nothing material in the argument which I have

left untouched. And I must now refer it to all the world, whether, for all that has been brought to the contrary, I may not still have a measure of the 'wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable; gentle, easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality and without hypocrisy.'

I have spoken abundantly more concerning myself than I intended or expected. Yet I must beg leave to add a few words more. How far I am from being an enemy to *prudence*, I hope appears already. It remains to inquire, whether I am an enemy to *reason* or *natural religion*?

"As to the first, he frankly tells us, The father of lies was the father of reasonings also. For he says, I observed more and more the advantage Satan had gained over us. Many were thrown into idle reasonings," (p. 298.) Yes, and they were hurt thereby. But *reason* is good, though *idle reasonings* are evil. Nor does it follow, that I am an enemy to the one, because I condemn the other.

"However, you are an enemy to natural religion. For you say, A Frenchman gave us a full account of the Chicasaws. They do nothing but eat, and drink, and smoak, from morning till night and almost from night till morning. For they arise at any hour of the night when they awake, and after eating and drinking as much as they can, go to sleep again. Hence we could not but remark, what is *the religion of nature*, properly so called, or that religion which flows from *natural reason*, unassisted by revelation," (p. 290.) I believe this dispute may be cut short by only defining the term. What does your lordship mean by *natural religion*? A *system of principles*? But I mean by it, in this place, *men's natural manners*. These certainly "flow from their natural passions and appetites," with that degree of reason which they have. And this, in other instances, is not contemptible; though it is not sufficient to teach them true religion.

II. I proceed to consider, in the second place, what is advanced concerning the operations of the Holy Spirit.

"Our blessed Redeemer promised to send among his followers the Holy Ghost, called 'the Spirit of Truth and the Comforter,' which should co-operate with man, in establishing his faith, and in perfecting his obedience; or in other words, should sanctify him to redemption," p. 2.

Accordingly, "the sanctification and redemption of the world, man cannot frustrate nor render ineffectual. For it is not in his power to make that to be undone, which is once done and perfected," p. 337.

I do not comprehend. Is all the world sanctified? Is not to be sanctified the same as to be made holy? Is all the world holy? And "can no man frustrate" his own sanctification?

"The Holy Ghost establishes our faith and perfects our obedience, by enlightening the understanding, and rectifying the will," p. 3.

"In the former respect, 1. He gave the gift of tongues at the day of Pentecost."

"Indeed enthusiasts in their ecstacies have talked very fluently in languages they had a very imperfect knowledge of in their sober intervals." I can no more believe this on the credit of Lord Shaftesbury and a Popish exorcist, than I can believe the tale of 'a hundred people talking without tongues,' on the credit of Dr. Middleton.

"The other gifts of the Spirit St. Paul reckons up thus. 'To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another the gifts of healing, to another working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits,'" (p. 23.) But why are the other three left out? 'Faith, divers kinds of tongues,' and the 'interpretation of tongues?'

I believe the 'word of wisdom' means, light to explain the manifold wisdom of God in the grand scheme of gospel salvation; the 'word of knowledge,' a power of explaining the Old Testament types and prophesies. 'Faith,' may mean, an extraordinary trust in God, under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances: 'The gifts of healing,'

a miraculous power of curing diseases: 'the discerning of spirits,' a supernatural discernment, whether men were upright or not? Whether they were qualified for offices in the church? And whether they who professed to speak by inspiration, really did so or not?

But "the richest of the fruits of the Spirit is the 'inspiration of Scripture,' (p. 30.) Herein the promise, that 'the Comforter,' should 'abide with us for ever,' is eminently fulfilled. For though his ordinary influence occasionally assists the faithful of all ages, yet his constant abode and supreme illumination is in the Scriptures of the New Testament, (p. 39.) I mean, he is there only as the illuminator of the understanding."

But does this agree with the following words? "Nature is not able to keep a mean. But grace is able: for 'the Spirit helpeth our infirmities.' We must apply to the 'guide of truth,' to prevent our being 'carried about with divers and strange doctrines,'" (p. 340.) Is he not then every where to illuminate the understanding, as well as to rectify the will? And, indeed, do we not need the one, as continually as the other?

"But how did he inspire the Scripture? He so directed the writers, that no considerable error should fall from them," (p. 45.) Nay, will not the allowing, there is any error in Scripture, shake the authority of the whole?

Again, what is the difference between the immediate and the virtual influence of the Holy Spirit? I know Milton speaks of 'virtual or immediate touch.' But most incline to think, virtual touch is no touch at all.

"Were the style of the New Testament utterly rude and barbarous, and abounding with every fault that can possibly deform a language: this is so far from proving such language not divinely inspired, that it is one certain mark of this original," (p. 55.) A vehement paradox this. But it is not proved yet, and probably never will.

"The labours of those who have attempted to defend the purity of Scripture-Greek, have been very idly employed," (p. 66.) Others think, they have been very wisely em-

played, and that they have abundantly proved their point.

Having now "considered the operations of the Holy Spirit, as the guide of truth, who clears and enlightens the understanding, I proceed to consider him as the Comforter, who purifies and supports the will, (p. 89.) Sacred antiquity is full in its accounts of the sudden and entire change made by the Holy Spirit in the disposition and manners of those whom it had enlightened; instantaneously effacing their evil habits, and familiarizing them to the performance of every good action, (p. 90.) No natural cause could effect this. Neither fanaticism nor superstition, nor both of them, will account for so sudden and lasting a conversion. Superstition never effects any considerable change in the manners. Its utmost force is just enough, to make us exact in the ceremonious offices of religion, or to cause some acts of penitence, as death approaches, (p. 90.) Fanaticism, indeed acts with greater violence, and by influencing the will, frequently forces the manners from their bent, and sometimes effaces the strongest impressions of custom and nature. But this fervour, though violent, is rarely lasting; never so long as to establish the new system into an habit. So that when its rage subsides, as it very soon does, (but where it drives into downright madness) the bias on the will keeps abating, till all the former habitudes recover their relaxed tone," (p. 92.)

Never were reflections more just than these. And whoever applies them to the matters of fact, which daily occur all over England, and particularly in London, will easily discern, that the changes now wrought, cannot be accounted for by natural causes; not by superstition; for the manners are changed; the whole life and conversation: not by fanaticism; for these changes are so "lasting, as to establish the new system into a habit:" not by mere reason; for they are sudden; therefore they can only be wrought by the Holy Spirit.

As to Savanarola's being a fanatic, or assuming the person of a prophet, I cannot take a popish historian's word. And what a man says on the rack proves nothing—

no more than his dying silent. Probably this might arise from shame and consciousness of having accused himself falsely under the torture.

"But how does the Spirit as Comforter abide with us for ever? He abides with the church for ever, as well personally in his office of comforter, as virtually in his office of enlightener," (p. 96.)

Does he not then abide with the church personally, in both these respects? What is meant by abiding virtually? And what is the difference between abiding virtually, and abiding personally?

"The question will be, Does he still exercise his office, in the same extraordinary manner as in the apostles' days," (p. 97.) I know none that affirms it. "St. Paul has determined this question. 'Charity,' says he, 'never faileth. But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away,' 1 Cor. xiii. 8, &c."

The common opinion is, that this respects another life, as he enforces his argument by this observation, 'Now we see through a glass darkly: but then face to face. Now we know in part: but then shall we know, even as also we are known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

"But the apostle means, charity is to accompany the church in all its stages: whereas prophecy and all the rest are only bestowed during its infant state, to support it against the delusions and powers of darkness," p. 100.

"The Corinthians abounded in these gifts, but were wanting in charity. And this the apostle here exposes by proving charity to be superior to them all, both in qualities and duration. The three first verses declare that the other gifts are useless without charity. The next four specify the qualities of charity; the remaining six declare its continuance, (p. 102.) 'Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.' In the next verse he gives the reason. 'For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is

come, then that which is in part shall be done away:' i. e. when that Christian life, the lines of which are marked out by the gospel, shall arrive to its full vigour and maturity; then the temporary aids, given to subdue prejudice, and to support the weak, shall like scaffolding, be removed." In other words, "when that Christian life, wherein the apostles and first Christians were but infants, shall arrive to its full vigour and maturity in their successors, then miracles shall cease." But I fear that time is not yet come. I doubt none that are now alive, enjoy more of the vigour and maturity of the Christian life, than the very first Christians did.

"To shew that the loss of these will not be regretted, when the church has advanced from a state of infancy to manhood," (alas the day! Were the apostles but infants to us?) "he illustrates the case by an elegant similitude. 'When I was a child I spake as a child—but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' His next remark, concerning the defects of human knowledge, is only an occasional answer to an objection. And the last verse shews, that the superior duration of charity refers to the present life only. 'Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity." That is, you may perhaps object, faith and hope will likewise remain in the church, when prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are ceased; they will so; but still charity is the greatest, because of its excellent qualities," p. 107.

"The last verse shews!" Is not this begging the question? How forced is all this? The plain natural meaning of the passage is, love, (the absolute necessity, and the nature of which is shewn in the foregoing verses,) has another commendation, it never faileth; it accompanies and adorns us to eternity. 'But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail,' when all things are fulfilled, and God is all in all: 'whether there be tongues, they shall cease.' One language shall prevail among all the inhabitants of heaven, while the low, imperfect languages of earth are forgotten. The knowledge, likewise we now so eagerly pursue, shall

then vanish away. As star-light is lost in that of the mid-day sun, so our present knowledge in the light of eternity. 'For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.' We have here but short, narrow, imperfect conceptions, even of the things round about us, and much more of the deep things of God. And even the prophecies which men deliver from God, are far from taking in the whole of future events. 'But when that which is perfect is come,' at death, and in the last day, 'that which is in part shall be done away.' Both that low, imperfect, glimmering light, which is all the knowledge we can now attain to: and these slow and unsatisfactory methods of attaining, as well as of imparting it to others. 'When I was a child, I talked as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child.' As if he had said, In our present state, we are mere infants, compared to what we shall be hereafter: 'but when I became a man, I put away childish things:' and a proportionable change shall we all find, when we launch into eternity. 'Now we see,' even the things which surround us, 'by means of a glass,' or 'mirror,' in a dim, faint, obscure manner, so that every thing is a kind of riddle to us: but then we 'shall see,' not a faint reflection, but the objects themselves, 'face to face,' directly and distinctly. 'Now I know but in part.' Even when God reveals things to me, great part of them is still kept under the veil: 'but then shall I know, even as I also am known:' in a clear, full, comprehensive manner, in some measure like God, who penetrates the centre of every object, and sees at one glance through my soul and all things. 'And now,' during the present life, 'abide these three, faith, hope, love: but the greatest of these,' in its duration, as well as the excellence of its nature, 'is love.' Faith, hope, love, are the sum of perfection on earth: love alone is the sum of perfection in heaven.

"It appears then, that the miraculous powers of the church, were to cease upon its perfect establishment," (p. 107.) Nothing like it appears from this scripture. But supposing it did, is Christianity perfectly established

yet? Even nominal Christianity? Mr. Brazewood took large pains to be fully informed. And, according to his account, five parts in six of the known world, are Mahometans or Pagans to this day. If so, Christianity is yet far from being perfectly established, either in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America.

"Having now established the fact," (wonderfully established!) "we may inquire into the fitness of it. There were two causes of the extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, one to manifest his mission, (and this was done once for all) the other to comfort and instruct the church," p. 110.

"At his first descent on the apostles, he found their minds rude and uninformed, strangers to all heavenly knowledge, and utterly averse to the gospel. He illuminated their minds with all necessary truth. For a rule of faith not being yet composed." (No! had they not 'the law and the prophets?') "some extraordinary infusion of his virtue was still necessary. But when this rule was perfected, part of this office was transferred upon the sacred canon; and his enlightening grace was not to be expected in such abundant measure, as to make the recipients infallible guides," (p. 112.) Certainly it was not. If this be all that is intended, no one will gainsay.

"Yet modern fanatics pretend to as high a degree of divine communications, as if no such rule were in being;" (I do not;) "or at least, as if that rule, needed the further assistance of the Holy Spirit to explain his own meaning." This is quite another thing. I do firmly believe, (and what serious man does not?) *Omnis scriptura legi debet ac Spiritu quo scripta est*: we need the same Spirit to understand the Scripture, which enabled the holy men of old to write it.

"Again, the whole strength of human prejudices was then set in opposition to the gospel, to overcome the obstinacy and violence of which, nothing less than the power of the Holy One was sufficient, (p. 113.) At present, whatever prejudices may remain, it draws the other way."

What, toward holiness? Toward temperance and chastity? Toward justice, mercy, and truth? Quite the reverse. And to overcome the obstinacy and violence of the heart-prejudices which still lie against these, the power of the Holy One is as necessary now, as ever it was from the beginning of the world.

"A further reason for the ceasing of miracles is, the peace and security of the church. The profession of the Christian faith, is now attended with ease and honour." "The profession:" true: but not the thing itself: as 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus' experience.

"But if miracles are not ceased, why do you not prove your mission thereby?" As your Lordship has frequently spoken to this effect, I will now give a clear answer.—And I purposely do it, in the same words, which I published many years since.

1. I have in some measure explained myself on the head of miracles, in the third part of the Farther Appeal. But since you repeat the demand, (though without taking any notice of the arguments there advanced,) I will endeavour once more to give you a distinct, full, and determinate answer. And, 1. I acknowledge that I have seen with my eyes, and heard with my ears, several things, which, to the best of my judgment, cannot be accounted for, by the ordinary course of natural causes, and which, I therefore believe, ought to be ascribed to the extraordinary interposition of God. If any man choose to style these miracles, I reclaim not. I have weighed the preceding and following circumstances. I have strove to account for them in a natural way: but could not, without doing violence to my reason. Not to go far back, I am clearly persuaded, that the sudden deliverance of John Haydon was one instance of this kind, and my own recovery on May the 10th, another. I cannot account for either of these in a natural way. Therefore I believe they were both supernatural.

I must, secondly, observe, that the truth of these facts is supported by the same kind of proof as that of all other facts is wont to be, namely, the testimony of competent

witnesses. And that the testimony here, is in as high a degree as any reasonable man can desire. Those witnesses were many in number: they could not be deceived themselves; for the fact in question they saw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears. Nor is it credible, that so many of them would combine together with a view of deceiving others; the greater part being men who feared God, as appeared by the general tenor of their lives. Thus, in the case of John Haydon. This thing was not contrived and executed in a corner, and in the presence of his own family only, or three or four persons prepared for the purpose. No: it was in an open street in the city of Bristol, at one or two in the afternoon. And the doors being open from the beginning, not only many of the neighbours, from every side, but several others (indeed whosoever desired it,) went in till the house could contain no more. Nor yet does the account of my own illness and recovery depend as you suppose, on my bare word. There were many witnesses, both of my disorder, on Friday and Saturday, and my lying down most part of Sunday, (a thing they were well satisfied could not be the effect of a slight indisposition,) and all who saw me that evening, plainly discerned (what I could not wholly conceal) that I was in pain: about two hundred of whom were present, when I was seized with the cough, which cut me short, so that I could speak no more; till I cried aloud, 'Lord, increase my faith: Lord, confirm the word of thy grace." The same persons saw and heard, that at the instant I changed my posture, and broke out into thanksgiving: that quickly after I stood upright, (which I could not before) and shewed no sign either of sickness or pain.

Yet I must desire you well to observe, thirdly, that my will, or choice, or desire, had no place either in this or any case of this kind, that has ever fallen under my notice. Five minutes before, I had no thought of this. I expected nothing less. I was willing to wait for a gradual recovery in the ordinary use of outward means. I did not look for any other cure, till the moment before I found it. And it is my belief, that the case was always the same with regard

to the most real and undoubted miracles. I believe God never interposed his miraculous power but according to his own sovereign Will: not according to the will of man: neither of him by whom he wrought, nor, of any other man whatsoever. The wisdom, as well as the power are his; nor can I find that ever, from the beginning of the world, he lodged this power in any mere man, to be used whenever that man saw good. Suppose, therefore, there was a man now upon earth, who did work "real and undoubted miracles;" I would ask, by whose power doth he work these? And at whose pleasure? His own, or God's? Not his own but God's. But if so, then your demand is made not on man, but on God. I cannot say it is modest, thus to challenge God; or well-suiting the relation of a creature to his Creator.

2. However, I cannot but think, there have been already so many interpositions of divine power, as will shortly leave you without excuse, if you either deny or despise them. We desire no favour; but the justice that diligent inquiry may be made concerning them. We are ready to name the persons on whom the power was shewn which belongeth to none but God; (not one or two, or ten, or twelve only;) to point out their places of abode: and we engage they shall answer every pertinent question fairly and directly; and, if required, shall give all their answers upon oath, before any who are impowered to receive them. It is our particular request, that the circumstances which went before, which accompanied, and which followed after the facts under consideration, may be thoroughly examined, and punctually noted down. Let but this be done, (and is it not highly needful it should? At least by those who would form an exact judgment?) And we have no fear, that any reasonable man should scruple to say, 'This hath God wrought.'

As there have been already so many instances of this kind far beyond what we dared to ask or think, I cannot take upon me to say, whether or not it will please God to add to their number. I have not herein 'known the mind

[illegible] counsellor.' He may, or [illegible] have no light, and [illegible] the Lord: let him do [illegible] only to be as clay in his [illegible]

[illegible] wrought ever so [illegible] I suppose you mean [illegible] sufficiently attested, ought [illegible] you say, would put [illegible] effectual proof [illegible] by no means. As com- [illegible] none upon earth more [illegible] on this very day, to [illegible] this would extremely [illegible] and the greatest [illegible] would not force them to [illegible] just where they did [illegible] their hearts against mi- [illegible] miracles.

[illegible] beginning of the world, even [illegible] against such inter- [illegible] may not be again till the [illegible] me to remind you [illegible] observe, that the argument [illegible] empowered of God [illegible] were? Did Pharaoh [illegible] wrought is an "effectual [illegible] Even when the [illegible] and the waters were [illegible] went into the midst [illegible] a wall on the right and [illegible] Nay

[illegible] man:

[illegible] dangers to brave,

[illegible] main.

[illegible] overwhelming wave.

[illegible] proof of the truth of their pre- [illegible] themselves" It was not: 'they [illegible] even at the Red Sea?'

Was the giving them day by day 'bread from heaven,' "an effectual proof" to those 'two hundred and fifty of the princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown,' who said with Dathan and Abiram, 'Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up,' Numb. xvi. 14. Nay, 'when the ground clave asunder that was under them, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up!' (v. 32.) Neither was this an "effectual proof" to those who saw it with their eyes, and heard the cries of those who went down into the pit: but the very next day, they 'murmured against Moses, and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord,' (v. 41.) Was not the case generally the same with regard to the prophets that followed? Several of whom 'stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire,' and did many other mighty works: yet their own people received them not. Yet 'they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword; they were destitute, afflicted, tormented!' Utterly contrary to the commonly received supposition, "That the working real, undoubted miracles, must bring all controversy to an end, and convince every gainsayer."

Let us come nearer yet. How stood the case between our Lord himself and his opposers? Did he not work real and undoubted miracles? And what was the effect? Still when 'he came to his own, his own received him not.' Still 'he was despised and rejected of men.' Still it was a challenge not to be answered, 'Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?' After this, how can you imagine, that whoever works miracles must convince all men of "the truth of his pretences?"

I would just remind you of only one instance more. 'There sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. The same heard Paul speak; who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving he had faith to be healed, said, with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.'—Here was so undoubted a miracle,

that the people 'lift up their voices, saying, The gods are come down in the likeness of men.' But how long were even these convinced of "the truth of his pretences?" Only till 'there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium;' and then they 'stoned him' (as they supposed) to death! Acts xiv. 1, &c. So certain it is, that no miracles whatever, that were ever yet wrought in the world, were effectual to prove the most glaring truth to those who hardened their hearts against it.

4. And it will equally hold in every age and nation. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be' convinced (of what they desire not to believe) 'though one rose from the dead.' Without a miracle, without one rising from the dead, εὰν τις θέλῃ ποιεῖν, 'if any man be willing to do his Will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.' But if he is not 'willing to do his Will,' he will never want an excuse, a plausible reason for rejecting it: yea, though ever so many miracles were wrought to confirm it. For let 'ever so much light come into the world,' it will have no effect, (such is the wise and just Will of God,) on those who 'love darkness rather than light.'—It will not convince those who do not simply desire to do 'the Will of their Father which is in heaven.' Those 'who mind earthly things,' who (if they do not continue in any gross outward sin, yet) love pleasure and ease; yet seek profit or power, preferment, or reputation. Nothing will ever be an effectual proof to these, of the holy and acceptable Will of God, unless first their proud hearts be humbled, their stubborn wills bowed down, and their desires brought, at least, in some degree, into obedience to the law of Christ.

Hence, although it should please God to work anew all the wonders that ever were wrought on earth, still these men, however wise and prudent they may be in things relating to the present world, would fight against God and all his messengers, and that in spite of these miracles. Mean while God will reveal his truth 'unto babes,' unto those who are meek and lowly, whose desires are in heaven, who want to 'know nothing save Jesus Christ and him

crucified.'—These need no outward miracles to shew them his Will; they have a plain rule, the written word. And 'the anointing which they have received of him, abideth in them, and teacheth them all things,' (1 John ii. 27.) Through this they are enabled to bring all doctrines 'to the law and the testimony.' And whatsoever is agreeable to this they receive, without waiting to see it attested by miracles. As, on the other hand, whatsoever is contrary to this they reject; nor can any miracles move them to receive it.

5. Yet I do not know, that God hath any where precluded himself from thus exerting his sovereign power, from working miracles, in any kind or degree, in any age, to the end of the world. I do not recollect any scripture wherein we are taught that miracles were to be confined within the limits either of the Apostolic or the Cyprianic age, or of any period of time, longer or shorter, even till the restitution of all things. I have not observed, either in the Old Testament or the New, any intimation at all of this kind. St. Paul indeed says once, concerning two of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, (so I think that text is usually understood,) 'whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease;' but he does not say, either that these or any other miracles shall cease, till faith and hope shall cease also; till they shall all be swallowed up in the vision of God, and love be all in all.

I presume you will allow, there is one kind of miracles (loosely speaking) which are not ceased: namely, τερατα ψευδους, *lying wonders*, diabolical miracles, wrought by the power of evil spirits. Nor can you easily conceive, that these will cease, as long as the 'father of lies' is the 'prince of this world.' And why should you think, that the God of Truth is less active than he, or that he will not have his miracles also? Only not as man wills, neither when he wills; but according to his own excellent wisdom and goodness.

6. But even if it were supposed, that God does now

work beyond the operation of merely natural causes, yet what impression would this make upon *you*, in the disposition of mind you are now in? Suppose the trial was repeated, and made again to-morrow. One informs you the next day, "While a clergyman was preaching yesterday, where I was, a man came who had been long ill of an incurable distemper. Prayer was made for him. And he was restored to perfect health."

Suppose now that this was a real fact, perhaps you would scarce have patience to hear the account of it: but would cut it short in the midst, with 'Do you tell this as something supernatural? Then miracles are not ceased.' But if you should venture to ask, Where was this? And who was the person that prayed? And it was answered, "At the Foundry near Moorfields; the person who prayed was Mr. Wesley." What a damp comes at once! What a weight falls on your mind at the first setting out! It is well if you have any heart or desire to move one step farther. Or if you should, what a strong additional propensity do you now feel to deny the fact? And is there not a ready excuse for so doing? "O! they who tell the story are his own people: most of whom we may be sure, will say any thing for him, and the rest will believe any thing."—But if you at length allowed the fact, might you not find means to account for it by natural causes? "Great crowds, violent heats, with obstructions and irregularities of the blood and spirits," will do wonders.—If you could not but allow it was more than natural, might not some plausible reason be found, for ranking it among the lying wonders, for ascribing it to the devil rather than God? And if, after all, you were convinced it was the finger of God, must you not still bring every doctrine advanced 'to the law and the testimony,' the only sure and infallible test of all?—What then is the use of this continual demand, "Shew us a sign, and we will believe?" What will you believe? I hope no more than is written in the Book of God. And thus far you might venture to believe, even without a miracle.

7. Let us consider this point a little farther. "What is it you would have us prove by miracles? The doctrines we

preach?" We prove these by Scripture and reason; and if need be by antiquity. What else is it then we are to prove by miracles? At length we have a distinct reply. "Wise and sober men will not otherwise be convinced" (i. e. unless you prove it by miracles) "that God is, by the means of such teachers and such doctrines, working a great and extraordinary work in the earth." So then the determinate point which you, in their name, call upon us to prove by miracles, is this: "That God is by these teachers, working a great and extraordinary work in the earth."—What I mean by a great and extraordinary work, is the bringing multitudes of gross, notorious sinners, in a short space, to the fear, and love, and service of God, to an entire change of heart and life.

Now, then, let us take a nearer view of the proposition, and see which part of it we are to prove by miracles.

Is it, 1. That A. B. was for many years without God in the world, a common swearer, a drunkard, or sabbath-breaker?

Or, 2. That he is not so now?

Or, 3. That he continued so till he heard this man preach, and from that time was another man?

Not so. The proper way to prove these facts, is by the testimony of competent witnesses. And these witnesses are ready, whenever required, to give full evidence of them.

Or, Would you have us prove by miracles,

4. That this was not done by our own power or holiness?—That God only is able to raise the dead, to quicken those who are dead in trespasses and sins?

Where then is the wisdom of those men who demand miracles in proof of such a proposition? One branch of which, "That such sinners are reformed by means of these teachers," being a plain fact, can only be proved by testimony, as all other facts are; and the other, "That this is *a work of God, and a more than ordinary work*," needs no proof, as carrying its own evidence to every thinking man.

8. To sum up this. No truly *wise* or *sober* man can possibly desire or expect miracles, to prove, either, I. That these *doctrines* are true: this must be decided by Scripture

and reason; or, 2. That these *facts* are true: this can only be proved by testimony: or, 3. That to *change* sinners from darkness to light, is the *work of God* alone; only using what instruments he pleases: this is glaringly self-evident: or, 4. That *such a change* wrought in *so many notorious* sinners, within so *short* a time is a *great* and *extraordinary* work of God. What then is it remains to be proved by miracles? Perhaps you will say, it is this, "That God has *called*, or *sent* you to do this." Nay, this is implied in the third of the foregoing propositions. If God has actually *used* us therein, if *his work* hath in fact prospered in our hands, then he hath *called* or *sent* us to do this. I entreat reasonable men to weigh this thoroughly, whether the *fact* does not plainly prove the *call*. Whether he who thus *enables* us to save souls alive, does not *commission* us so to do? Whether, by giving us the *power* to pluck these brands out of the burning, he does not *authorise* us to exert it? O that it were possible for you to consider calmly, whether the *success* of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even as it is preached by us, the least of his servants, be not itself a *miracle*, never to be forgotten! One which cannot be denied, as being visible at this day, not in one, but a hundred places: one which cannot be accounted for by the *ordinary* course of any *natural causes* whatsoever: one which cannot be ascribed, with any colour of reason, to diabolical agency: and, lastly, one which will bear the infallible test, the trial of the written word.*

But "why do you talk of the *success of the gospel* in England, which was a Christian country before you were born?" Was it indeed? Is it so at this day? I would explain myself a little on this head also.

And, 1. None can deny that the people of England, in general, are *called* Christians. They are *called* so, a few only excepted, by others, as well as by themselves. But I presume no man will say the *name* makes the thing; that men *are* Christians, barely because they are *called* so. It must be allowed, 2. That the people of England, generally

* Second Letter to Dr. Church.

speaking, have been *christened*, or baptised; but neither can we infer, "These were *once* baptized; therefore they are Christians now." It is, 3. Allowed, That many of those who were once *baptized*, and are *called* Christians to this day, *hear* the word of God, attend *public prayers*, and partake of the *Lord's Supper*. But neither does this prove, that they *are Christians*. For notwithstanding this, some of them live in open sin: and others (though not conscious to themselves of *hypocrisy*, yet) are utter strangers to the *religion of the heart*: are full of pride, vanity, covetousness, ambition; of hatred, anger, malice, or envy; and consequently, are no more *spiritual Christians* than the open drunkard, or common swearer.

Now these being removed, where are the *Christians*, from whom we may properly term England a *Christian* country? The men who have *the mind which was in Christ*, and who *walk as he also walked?* Whose inmost soul is renewed after the image of God; and who are outwardly holy, as he who hath called them is holy? There are doubtless a few such to be found. To deny this, would be "want of candor." But how few! How thinly scattered up and down! And as for a *Christian visible church*, or a body of Christians, visibly united together, where is this to be seen?

Ye different sects, who all declare,
Lo! here is Christ, or Christ is there,
Your stronger proofs *divinely* give,
And *shew* me where the *Christians live!*

And what use is it of, what good end does it serve, to term England a *Christian country?* Although, it is true, most of the natives are *called* Christians, have been *baptized*, frequent the *ordinances*: and although here and there, a real Christian is to be found, *as a light shining in a dark place*. Does it do any honour to our great Master, among those who are not *called* by his name? Does it recommend Christianity to the *Jews*, the *Mahometans*, or the avowed *Heathens?* Surely no one can conceive it does. It only makes *Christianity* stink in their nostrils. Does it answer any *good end*, with regard to those who are called

by this worthy name? I fear not; but rather an exceedingly bad one. For does it not keep multitudes easy in their *heathen* practices? Does it not make or keep still greater numbers satisfied with their heathen *tempers?* Does it not directly tend to make both the one and the other imagine, that they *are* what indeed they *are not?* That they *are Christians*, while they are utterly without Christ, and without God in the world? To close this point. If men are not *Christians*, till they are renewed after the image of Christ, and if the *people of England*, in general, are not thus renewed, why do we term them so? 'The god of this world hath long blinded their hearts.' Let us do nothing to increase that blindness: but rather to recover them from that 'strong delusion,' that they may no longer 'believe a lie.'

Let us labour to convince all mankind, that to be *real Christians* is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and to serve him with all our strength; to love our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore to do unto every man, as we would he should do unto us.*

To change one of these Heathens into a real Christian, and to continue him such, all the *ordinary operations* of the Holy Spirit are absolutely necessary. "But what are they?" I sum them up, (as I did in the *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion)* in the words of as learned and orthodox a divine as ever England bred.

'Sanctification being opposed to our corruption, and answering fully to the latitude thereof, whatsoever holiness and perfection are wanting in our nature, must be supplied by the Spirit of God. Wherefore, we being by nature totally void of all saving truth, and under an impossibility of knowing the will of God: this 'Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God,' and *revealeth* them unto the sons of men; so that thereby the darkness of their understanding is expelled, and they are enlightened with the knowledge of God. The same Spirit which re-

* Second Letter to Dr. Church.

vealeth the object of faith, generally, to the universal church, doth also *illuminate the understanding* of such as believe; that they may receive the truth. For 'faith is the gift of God,' not only in the object, but also in the act. And this gift, is a gift of the Holy Ghost working within us. And as the increase of perfection, so the orignal of faith is from the Spirit of God, by internal illumination of the soul.'

'The second part of the office of the Holy Ghost, is the renewing of man, in all the parts and faculties of his soul. For our natural corruption consisting in an aversion of our wills, and a depravation of our affections; an inclination of them to the will of God, is wrought within us by the Spirit of God.

'The third part of his office is, to lead, direct, and govern us, in our actions and conversations. 'If we live in the Spirit,' quickened by his renovation, we must also 'walk in the Spirit,' following his direction, led by his manuduction. We are also animated and acted by the Spirit of God, who giveth 'both to will and to do.'

"And 'as many as are thus led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God,' (Rom. viii. 14.) Moreover, that this direction may prove more effectual, we are guided in our prayers by the same Spirit: according to the promise, 'I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication,' (Zech. xii. 10.) Whereas then, 'this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:' and whereas 'we know not what we should pray for as we ought, the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered,' (ver. 26, 27.) 'And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' From which intercession (made for all true Christians) "he hath the name of the *Paraclete* given him by Christ; who said, 'I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete,' (John xiv. 16, 26.)

For, 'if any man sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,' saith St. John, 1 Epist. ii. 1: 'who maketh intercession for us,' saith St. Paul, Rom. viii. 34. A *Paraclete*, then, in the notion of the Scriptures, is an intercessor."

"It is also the office of the Holy Ghost to 'assure us of the adoption of sons,' to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God toward us, to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance. 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' As, therefore, we are born again by the Spirit, and receive from him our regeneration, so we are also by the same Spirit *assured of our adoption*. Because being 'sons, we are also heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,' by the same Spirit we have the *pledge*, or rather the *earnest* of our inheritance. 'For he which establisheth us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and hath given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts;' so 'we are sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.' The Spirit of God, as given to us in this life, is to be looked upon as an earnest, being part of that reward which is promised, and, upon performance of the covenant which God hath made with us, certainly to be received."

It now rests with your lordship to take your choice; either to condemn or acquit both: either your lordship must condemn bishop Pearson for an *enthusiast*, or you must acquit me: for I have his express authority on my side, concerning every text, which I affirm to belong to all Christians.

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But I have greater authority than his, and such as I reverence, only less than the oracles of God. I mean, that of our own church. I shall close this head, by setting down what occurs in her authentic records, concerning either our *receiving the Holy Ghost*, or his *ordinary operations* in all true Christians.

In her daily Service she teacheth us all to 'beseech God to grant us his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life may be pure and holy:' to pray for our 'sovereign Lord the king,' that God would 'replenish him with the grace of his Holy Spirit;' for all the royal family, 'that they may be endued with his Holy Spirit, and enriched with his heavenly grace;' for all the clergy and people, that he would 'send down upon them the healthful Spirit of his grace;' for the 'catholic church,' that 'it may be guided and governed by his good Spirit; and for all therein, who, at any time, 'make their common supplications unto him;' that the 'fellowship' or communication 'of the Holy Ghost may be with them all evermore.'

Her Collects are full of petitions to the same effect. 'Grant that we may daily be renewed by the Holy Spirit.'* 'Grant that in all our sufferings here, for the testimony of thy truth, we may by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed, and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may love and bless our persecutors.'† 'Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity.'‡ 'O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration, we may think those things that are good, and by thy merciful guidance may perform the same.'§ 'We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless, but send us the Holy Ghost to comfort us.'‖ 'Grant us by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort.'¶ 'Grant us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit to

* Collect for Christmas Day. † St. Stephen's Day. ‡ Quinquagesima Sunday. § Fifth Sunday after Easter. ‖ Sunday after Ascension-day. ¶ Whitsunday.

think and do always such things as be rightful.'* 'O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts.'† 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name.'‡

'Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, (or this person,) that he may be born again.'—'Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons,' (N. B. already baptized,) 'that they may continue thy servants.'

'Almighty God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these persons by water and the Holy Ghost:—strengthen them with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increase in them the manifold gifts of thy grace.'§

From these passages it may sufficiently appear for what purposes, every Christian, according to the doctrine of the Church of England does now *receive the Holy Ghost*. But this will be still more clear from those that follow; wherein we may likewise observe, a plain, rational sense of God's *revealing* himself to us, of the *inspiration* of the Holy Ghost, and of a believer's *feeling* in himself the *mighty working* of the Spirit of Christ.

'God gave them of old, grace to be his children, as he doth us now. But now by the coming of our Saviour Christ, *we have received* more abundantly *the Spirit of God* in our hearts.'‖ 'He died to destroy the rule of the devil in us, and he rose again to send down his Holy Spirit to *rule in our hearts*.' 'We have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, as a seal and pledge of our everlasting inheritance.'¶

'The Holy Ghost sat upon each of them, like as it had been cloven tongues of fire, to teach, that it is he that *giveth eloquence and utterance* in preaching the gospel, which engendereth a burning *zeal* towards God's word, and giveth all men *a tongue*, yea, a fiery tongue.' (N. B. What-

* Ninth Sunday after Trinity. † Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity. ‡ Communion Office. § Office of Confirmation. ‖ Hom. on Faith. ¶ Hom. on the Resurrection.

ever occurs, in any of the Journals, of God's giving me *utterance*, or enabling me to speak *with power*, cannot therefore be quoted as *enthusiasm*, without wounding the church through my side.) 'So that if any man be a dumb Christian, not professing his faith openly, he giveth men occasion to doubt, lest he have not the grace of the Holy Ghost within him.'*

'It is the office of the Holy Ghost to sanctify; which the more it is hid from our understanding,' (i. e. the particular manner of his working,) the more it ought to move all men to wonder at the secret and mighty workings of God's Holy Spirit, which is within us. For it is the Holy Ghost that doth *quicken* the minds of men, *stirring up* godly motions in their hearts. Neither does he think it sufficient inwardly to work the new birth of men, unless he does also dwell and abide in them. 'Know ye not,' saith St. Paul, 'that ye are the temples of God, and that his Spirit dwelleth in you? Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is within you?' Again he saith, 'Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.' For why? 'The Spirit of God dwelleth in you.' To this agreeth St. John, (1 John ii. 27,) 'The anointing which ye have received' (he meaneth the Holy Ghost) 'abideth in you.' And St. Peter saith the same; 'The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.' O what comfort is this to the heart of a true Christian, to think that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in him! 'If God be with us,' as the apostle saith, 'who can be against us?' He giveth patience and joyfulness of heart in temptation and affliction, and is therefore worthily called the *Comforter*, (John xiv. 16.) He doth instruct the hearts of the simple in the knowledge of God, and his word; therefore he is justly termed *the Spirit of truth*. And (N. B.) where the Holy Ghost doth instruct, and teach, there is no delay at all in learning.'†

[From this passage, I learn, 1. That every true Christian now *receives* the Holy Ghost, as the *Paraclete* or *Comforter*

* Hom. on Whitsunday, part. I. † Ibid.

promised by our Lord, (John xiv. 13.) Secondly, That every Christian receives him as the *Spirit of truth*, (promised John xvi.) to *teach him all things*. And, 3. That the *anointing*, mentioned in the first epistle of St. John, *abides in every Christian.*]

'In reading of God's word, he profiteth most, who is most inspired with the Holy Ghost.' *

'Human and worldly wisdom is not needful to the understanding the Scripture; but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them, who with humility, and diligence, search for it.' †

'Make him know and feel, that there is no other name given under heaven, unto men, whereby we can be saved. If we feel our conscience at peace with God, through remission of our sins—all is of God.' ‡ 'If you feel such a faith in you, rejoice in it, and let it be daily increasing by well-working.' ‖ 'The faithful may feel wrought, tranquillity of conscience, the increase of faith and hope, with many other graces of God.' § 'Godly men feel inwardly God's Holy Spirit inflaming their hearts with love.' ¶

'God give us grace to know these things, and feel them in our hearts! This knowledge and feeling are not of ourselves. Let us, therefore, meekly call upon the bountiful Spirit, the Holy Ghost, to inspire us with his presence, that we may be able to hear the goodness of God, to our salvation. For without his lively inspiration, we cannot so much as speak the Name of the Mediator. 'No man can say, Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' Much less should we be able to believe and know these great mysteries that be opened to us by Christ. 'But we have received,' saith St. Paul, 'not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God:' for this purpose, 'that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God.'

* Hom. on reading the Scripture. Part I. † Ibid. P. II. ‡ Hom. on Rogation week. P. III. ‖ Hom. on Faith. P. III. § Hom. on the Sacrament. P. I. ¶ Hom. on certain places of Scripture. P. I.

In the power of the Holy Ghost resteth all ability to know God, and to please him. It is he that purifieth the mind by his secret working. He enlighteneth the heart to conceive worthy thoughts of Almighty God. He sitteth on the tongue of man, to stir him to speak his honour. He only ministereth spiritual strength to the powers of the soul and body. And if we have any gift whereby we may profit our neighbour, all is wrought by this one and self-same Spirit.' *

Every proposition which I have any where advanced concerning those operations of the Holy Ghost, which I believe are common to all Christians in all ages, is here clearly maintained by our own church.

Being fully convinced of this, I could not well understand, for many years, how it was, that on the mentioning any of these great truths, even among men of education, the cry immediately arose, "An enthusiast, an enthusiast!" But I now plainly perceive, this is only an old fallacy in a new shape. To object enthusiasm to any person or doctrine, is but a decent method of begging the question. It generally spares the objector the trouble of reasoning, and is a shorter and easier way of carrying his cause.

For instance: I assert, that "till a man receives the Holy Ghost, he is without God in the world; that he cannot know the things of God, unless God reveal them unto him by his Spirit; no, nor have even one holy or heavenly temper, without the inspiration of the Holy One." Now should one who is conscious to himself, that he has experienced none of these things, attempt to confute these propositions either from Scripture or antiquity, it might prove a difficult task. What then shall he do? Why, cry out, "Enthusiasm! Fanaticism!" and the work is done.

"But is it not mere enthusiasm or fanaticism to talk of the New Birth?" So one might imagine from the manner in which your Lordship talks of it. "The Spirit did not

* Hom. for Rogation-week. P. III.

stop till it had manifested itself in the last effort of his power, the New Birth, (p. 123.) The New Birth began in storms and tempests, in cries and ecstacies, in tumults and confusions, (p. 126.) Persons who had no sense of religion, that is, no ecstatic feelings, or pains of the New Birth, (p. 180.) What can be the issue of the New Birth, attended with those infernal throes? (p. 170.) Why should he elicit sense from these Gentiles, when they were finally to be deprived of it in ecstacies and New Births? (p. 225.) All these circumstances Mr. W. has declared to be constant symptoms of the New Birth?" p. 222.

So the New Birth is, throughout the whole tract, the standing topic of ridicule!

"No, not the New Birth itself, but your enthusiastic, ridiculous account of it." What is then my account of the New Birth? I gave it some years ago in these words:

'It is that great change which God works in the soul, when he brings it into life: when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God, when it is 'created anew in Christ Jesus,' when it is 'renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness: when the love of the world is changed into the love of God, pride into humility, passion into meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love to all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the 'earthly, sensual, devilish mind,' is turned into 'the mind which was in Christ Jesus.'' Vol. IV. of Sermons.

This is my account of the New Birth. What is there ridiculous or enthusiastic in it?

"But what do you mean by those tempests, and cries, and pains, and infernal throes attending the New Birth?" I will tell you as plainly as I can, in the very same words I used to Dr. Church, (after premising, that some experience much, some very little of these pains and throes.)

'When men feel in themselves the heavy burthen of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell, they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open their grief unto Almighty God, and call to him for mercy.—This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and loathing of all worldly things and pleasures comes in place, so that nothing then liketh them more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behaviour of body, to shew themselves weary of life.'

'Now, permit me to ask, What, if before you had observed, that these were the very words of our own church, one of your acquaintance or parishioners had come and told you, that ever since he heard a sermon at the Foundry, he saw damnation before him, and beheld with the eye of his mind the horror of hell! What if he had trembled and quaked, and been so taken up, 'partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from the danger of hell and damnation, as to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behaviour, to shew himself weary of life?' Would you have scrupled to say, "Here is another deplorable instance of the Methodists driving men to distraction?" *

I have now finished, as my time permits, what I had to say, either concerning myself, or on the Operations of the Holy Spirit. In doing this, I have used great plainness of speech, and yet, I hope, without rudeness. If any thing of that kind has slipped from me, I am ready to retract it. I desire, on the one hand, to 'accept no man's person;' and yet, on the other, to give 'honour to whom honour is due.

* Second Letter to Dr. Church.

If your lordship should think it worth your while to spend any more words upon me, may I presume to request one thing of your lordship, to be more serious? It cannot injure your lordship's character, or your cause. Truth is great, and will prevail.

Wishing your lordship all temporal and spiritual blessings, I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's dutiful Son and Servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

Nov. 26, 1762.

A

LETTER TO A PERSON

LATELY JOINED WITH

THE PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS,

IN ANSWER TO A LETTER WRITTEN BY HIM.

BRISTOL, FEB. 10, 1747-8.

YOU ask me, "Is there any difference between Quakerism and Christianity?" I think there is. What that difference is, I will tell you as plainly as I can. I will first set down the account of Quakerism (so called) which is given by Robert Barclay: and then add, wherein it agrees with, and wherein it differs from, Christianity.

I. "Seeing the height of all happiness is placed in the true knowledge of God, the right understanding of this is what is most necessary to be known in the first place.

II. "It is by the Spirit alone that the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be revealed. And these revelations, which are absolutely necessary for the building up of true faith, neither do nor can ever contradict right reason or the testimony of the Scriptures."

Thus far there is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

"Yet these revelations are not to be subjected to the examination of the Scriptures as to a touchstone."

Here there is a difference. The Scriptures are the touchstone whereby Christians examine all (real or supposed) revelations. In all cases they appeal *to the law and* to *the testimony*, and *try* every *spirit* thereby.

III. "From these revelations of the Spirit of God to the saints, have proceeded the Scriptures of truth."

In this there is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

"Yet the Scriptures are *not the principal ground of all truth and knowledge*, nor the adequate, primary rule of faith and manners. Nevertheless they are a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit. By him the saints are led into all truth. Therefore the Spirit is the first and principal leader."

If by these words, "The Scriptures are *not the principal ground of truth and knowledge*, nor the *adequate, primary rule of faith and manners*," be only meant, that "*the Spirit is our first and principal leader*." Here is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

But there is great impropriety of expression. For tho' the Spirit is our *principal leader*, yet he is not our rule at all; the Scriptures are the rule whereby he leads us into all truth. Therefore, only talk good English; call the Spirit our Guide, (which signifies an intelligent being,) and the Scriptures our Rule, (which signifies something used by an intelligent being,) and all is plain and clear.

IV. "All mankind is fallen and dead, deprived of the sensation of this inward testimony of God, and subject to the power and nature of the devil, while they abide in their natural state. And hence not only their words and deeds, but all their imaginations are evil perpetually in the sight of God."

V. "God out of his infinite love hath so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, to the end that whosoever believeth on him, might have everlasting life. And he enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, as he tasted death for every man."

VI. "The benefit of the death of Christ is not only ex-

tended to such as have the distinct knowledge of his death and sufferings, but even unto those who are inevitably excluded from this knowledge. Even these may be partakers of the benefit of his death, though ignorant of the history, if they suffer his death to take place in their hearts, so as of wicked men to become holy."

In these points there is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

VII. "As many as receive the light, in them is produced a holy and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all other blessed fruits. By which holy birth, as we are sanctified, so we are justified."

Here is a wide difference between Quakerism and Christianity. This is a flat justification by works. Whereas the Christian doctrine is, That 'we are justified by faith:' that 'unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.'

The ground of this mistake is, the not understanding the meaning of the word justification. For Robert Barclay takes it in the same sense as the Papists do, confounding it with sanctification. So in the 208th page of his Apology, he says, in express terms, "Justification taken in its proper signification, is, making one just, and is all one with sanctification."

VIII. "In whom this holy birth is fully brought forth, the body of sin and death is crucified, and their hearts are subjected to the truth, so as not to obey any suggestion of the evil one, but to be free from actual sinning and transgressing of the law of God, and in that respect, perfect."

IX. "They in whom his grace hath wrought in part to purify and sanctify them, may yet by disobedience fall from it, and make shipwreck of the faith." In these propositions there is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

The uncommon expression, "This holy birth brought forth," is taken from Jacob Behmen. And indeed so are

many other expressions used by the Quakers, as are also many of their sentiments.

X. "By this light of God in the heart, every true minister is ordained, prepared, and supplied in the work of the ministry."

As to part of this proposition, there is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity. Doubtless "every true minister is by the light of God prepared and supplied in the work of the ministry." But the apostles themselves *ordained* them by 'laying on of hands.' So we read throughout the Acts of the Apostles.

"They who have received this gift, ought not to use it as a trade, to get money thereby. Yet it may be lawful for such to receive what may be needful to them for food and clothing."

In this there is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

"We judge it no ways unlawful, for a woman to preach in the assemblies of God's people."

In this there is a manifest difference. For the apostle Paul saith expressly, '*Let your women keep* silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak.—And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church,' 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

Robert Barclay indeed says, 'Paul here only reproves the inconsiderate and talkative women.' But the text says no such thing. It evidently speaks of women in general. Again, the apostle Paul saith to Timothy, 'Let your women learn in silence with all subjection. For I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, (which public teaching necessarily implies,) but to be in silence,' (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.) To this Robert Barclay makes only that harmless reply; 'We think this is not any ways repugnant to this doctrine.' Not repugnant to this, 'I do not suffer a woman to teach!' Then I know not what is.

"But a woman 'laboured with Paul in the work of the gospel.'" Yea! but not in the way he had himself expressly forbidden.

"But Joel foretold, 'Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.' And 'Philip had four daughters which prophesied.' And the apostle himself directs women to *prophesy;* only with their 'heads covered.'" Very good. But how do you prove that prophesying in any of these places means preaching?

XI. "All true worship to God is offered in the inward and immediate moving of his own Spirit. We ought not to pray or preach where and when we will, but where and when we are moved thereto by his Spirit. All other worship, both praises, prayers, and preachings, which man sets about in his own will, and at his own appointment, which he can begin and end at pleasure, do, or leave undone, as himself sees meet, are but superstitions, will-worship, and abominable idolatries."

Here lies one of the main differences between Quakerism and Christianity. It is true indeed, that "all true worship to God is offered in the inward and immediate moving of his own Spirit:" or, (to speak plainly,) that we cannot truly worship God, unless his Spirit move or incline our hearts. It is equally true, that "we ought to pray and preach, only where and when we are moved thereto by his Spirit." But I fear you do not in any wise understand, what the being moved by his Spirit means. God moves man whom he has made a reasonable creature, according to the reason which he has given him. He moves him by his understanding, as well as his affections, by light as well as by heat. He moves him to do this or that by conviction, full as often as by desire. Accordingly, you are as really moved by the Spirit when he convinces you, you ought to feed him that is hungry, as when he gives you ever so strong an impulse, desire, or inclination so to do.

In like manner, you are as really moved by the Spirit to pray, whether it be in public or private, when you have a conviction it is the will of God you should, as when you

have the strongest impulse upon your heart. And he does truly move you to preach, when in his light you see light clearly satisfying you it is his will; as much as when you feel the most vehement impulse or desire to 'hold forth the words of eternal life.'

Now let us consider the main proposition. "All worship which man sets about in his own will, and at his own appointment."—Hold! That is quite another thing. It may be at his own appointment, and yet not in his own will. For instance; it is not my own will to preach at all. It is quite contrary to my will. Many a time have I cried out, 'Lord, send by whom thou wilt send. Only send not me!' But I am moved by the Spirit of God to preach: he clearly *shews* me it is his will I should; and that I should do it *when* and *where* the greatest number of poor sinners may be gathered together. Moved by him, I give up my will, and appoint a time and place, when by his power I trust to speak in his name.

How widely different, then, from true Christianity is that amazing sentence, "All praises, prayers, and preachings, which man can begin and end at his pleasure, do or leave undone, as himself sees meet, are superstition, will-worship, and abominable idolatry, in the sight of God!"

There is not one tittle of Scripture for this; nor yet is there any sound reason. When you take it for granted, "In all preachings which a man begins or ends at his pleasure, does or leaves undone, as he sees meet," he is not moved by the Spirit of God, you are too hasty a great deal. It may be by the Spirit, that he sees meet to do or leave it undone. How will you prove that it is not? His pleasure may depend on the pleasure of God, signified to him by his Spirit. His appointing this or that time or place, does in no wise prove the contrary. Prove me the proposition if you can, "Every man who preaches or prays at an appointed time, preaches or prays in his own will, and not by the Spirit."

That all such preaching is will-worship, in the sense St. Paul uses the word, is no more true than that it is

murder. That it is superstition, remains also to be proved. That it is "abominable idolatry," how will you reconcile with what follows but a few lines after? "However it might please God, who winked at the times of ignorance, to raise some breathings and answer them." What! Answer the breathings of *abominable idolatry!* I observe how warily this is worded. But it allows enough. If God ever raised and answered those prayers, which were made at set times, then those prayers could not be "abominable idolatry."

Again, that prayers and preachings, though made at appointed times, may yet proceed from the Spirit of God, may be clearly proved from those other words of Robert Barclay himself, p. 389.

"That preaching, (or prayer,) which is not done by the actings and movings of God's Spirit, cannot beget faith." Most true. But preaching and prayer at *appointed* times, have begotten faith both at Bristol and Paulton. (You know well.) Therefore that preaching and prayer, though at *appointed* times, was done by the actings and movings of God's Spirit."

It follows, that this preaching and prayer, were far from "abominable idolatry." That expression can never be defended. Say, It was a rash word, and give it up.

In truth, from the beginning to the end, you set this matter upon a wrong foundation. It is not on this circumstance, "The being at *set* times or not that the acceptableness of our prayers depends: but on the intention and tempers with which we pray." He that prays in faith, at whatsoever time, is heard. In every time and place, God accepts him who 'lifts up holy hands, without wrath or doubting.' The charge of superstition, therefore, returns upon yourself. For what gross superstition is this to lay so much stress on an indifferent circumstance, and so little on *faith* and the *love* of God!

But to proceed. "We confess singing of psalms, to be a part of God's worship, and very sweet and refreshful,

when it proceeds from a true sense of God's love. But as for formal singing, it has no foundation in Scripture."

In this there is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

But let it be observed here, that the Quakers in general cannot be excused, if this be true. For if they "confess singing of psalms to be a part of God's worship," how dare they either condemn or neglect it!

"Silence is a principal part of God's worship: i. e. men's 'sitting silent together, ceasing from all outwards, from their own words, and actings, in the natural will and comprehension, and feeling after the inward seed of life."

In this there is a manifest difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

This is will-worship, if there be any such thing under heaven. For there is neither command, nor example for it in Scripture. Robert Barclay indeed refers to abundance of scriptures, to prove it is a *command*. But as he did not see good to set them down at length, I will take the trouble to transcribe a few of them.

'Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart,' Psalm xxvii. 14. 'Rest in the Lord and wait patiently; fret not thyself at him who prospereth in his way,' Psalm xxxvii. 7. 'Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land,' ver. 34. 'Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee,' Prov. xx. 23.

By these one may judge of the rest. But how amazing is this? What are all these to the point in question?

For *examples of silent meetings* he refers to the five texts following:

'They were all with one accord in one place,' Acts ii. 1. 'So they sat down with him seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great,' Job. ii. 13. 'Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of God—And I sat astonied until the evening sacrifice,' Ezra ix. 4.

'Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me,' Ezek. xiv. 1, and xx. 1.

Was it possible for Robert Barclay to believe, that any one of these texts was any thing to the purpose? The odd expressions here also, "Ceasing from all outwards, in the natural will and comprehension," and "feeling after the inward seed of life," are borrowed from Jacob Behmen.

XII. "As there is one Lord and one faith, so there is one baptism." Yea, one outward baptism: which you deny. Here, therefore, is another difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

But "if those whom John baptized with water, were not baptized with the baptism of Christ, then the baptism of water, is not the baptism of Christ."—This is a mere quibble. The sequel ought to be, "Then *that* baptism of water, (i. e. John's baptism,) was not the baptism of Christ." Who says it was?

Yet Robert Barclay is so fond of this argument that he repeats it almost in the same words. "If John who administered the baptism of water, yet did not baptize with the baptism of Christ, then the baptism of water is not the baptism of Christ." This is the same fallacy still. The sequel here also should be, "Then *that* baptism of water was not the baptism of Christ."

He repeats it, with a little variation, a third time, "Christ himself saith, 'John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.' He repeats it a fourth time: "Peter saith, 'Then remembered I the word of the Lord, John baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost.' From all which it follows, that such as John baptised with water, yet were not baptised with the baptism of Christ." Very true. But this proves neither more nor less than that the baptism of John differed from the baptism of Christ. And so doubtless it did: not indeed as to the 'outward sign,' but as to the inward grace.

XIII. "The breaking of bread by Christ with his disciples was but a figure, and ceases in such as have obtained

the substance." Here is another manifest difference between Quakerism and Christianity. From the very time that our Lord gave that command, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' all Christians throughout the habitable world, did 'eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him.'

Allowing, therefore, all that Robert Barclay affirms, for eighteen or twenty pages together, viz. 1. That believers partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner; 2. That this may be done, in some sense, when we are not eating bread and drinking wine; 3. That the Lutherans, Calvinists, and Papists, differ from each other with regard to the Lord's supper; and, 4. That many of them have spoken wildly and absurdly concerning it: yet all this will never prove, that we need not do, what Christ has expressly commanded to be done; and what the whole body of Christians in all ages have done, in obedience to that command

That there was such a command, you cannot deny. But you say, "It is ceased in such as have obtained the substance."

St. Paul knew nothing of this. He says nothing of its ceasing, in all he writes of it to the Corinthians. Nay, quite the contrary. He says, 'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.' "O," say you, "the apostle means his inward coming, which some of the Corinthians had not yet known." Nay, this cannot be his meaning. For he saith to all the Corinthian communicants, 'Ye do shew the Lord's death, till he come.' Now if he was not come (spiritually) in some of these, undoubtedly he was in others. Consequently he cannot be speaking here of that coming, which in many of them, at least, was already past. It remains, that he speaks of his coming in the clouds, to judge both the quick and dead.

In what Robert Barclay teaches concerning the Scriptures, Justification, Baptism, and the Lord's supper, lies the main difference between Quakerism and Christianity.

XIV. "Since God hath assumed to himself the dominion of the conscience, who alone can rightly instruct and govern it, therefore it is not lawful for any whatsover, to force the consciences of others." In this there is no difference at all between Quakerism and Christianity.

XV. "It is not lawful for Christians to give or receive titles of honour, as, your majesty, your lordship, &c."—In this there is a difference between Quakerism and Christianity. Christians may give titles of honour, such as are usually annexed to certain offices. Thus St. Paul gives the usual title of *most noble* to the Roman governor. Robert Barclay indeed says, "he would not have called him such, if he had not been *truly noble:* as indeed he was, in that he would not give way to the fury of the Jews against him."

The Scripture says quite otherwise: that he *did* give way to the fury of the Jews against him. I read, 'Festus willing to do the Jews a pleasure,' (who had 'desired a favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, lying in wait in the way to kill him,) 'said to Paul, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. If I have done any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them.'

Hence it plainly appears, that Festus was a very wicked person, one who to 'do the Jews a pleasure, would have betrayed the innocent blood. But although St. Paul was not ignorant of his character, still he calls him *most noble* Festus, giving him the title of his office; which indeed was neither more nor less than saying, "Governor Festus," or "King Agrippa."

It is therefore mere superstition to scruple this. And it is, if possible, greater superstition still, to scruple saying, *You*, *Vous*, or *Ihr*, whether to one or more persons, as is the common way of speaking in any country. It is this

which fixes the language of every nation. It is this which makes me say *you* in England, *vous* in France, and *ihr* in Germany, rather than *thou*, *tu*, or *du*, rather than Συ, Σε, or אתה, (which if we speak strictly, is the only scriptural language; not *thou* or *thee* any more than *you*.) But the placing religion in such things as these, is such egregious trifling, as naturally tends to make all religion stink in the nostrils of Infidels and Heathens.

And yet this, by a far greater abuse of words than that you would reform, you call "the plain language." O my friend! He uses the plain language, who speaks the truth from his heart. Not he who says *thee* or *thou*, and at the mean time will dissemble or flatter, like the rest of the world.

"It is not lawful for Christians to kneel or bow the body, or uncover the head to any man." If this is not lawful, then some law of God forbids it. Can you shew me that law? If you cannot, then the scrupling this is another plain instance of superstition, not Christianity.

"It is not lawful for a Christian to use superfluities in apparel: as neither, to use such games, sports, and plays, under the notion of recreations, as are not consistent with gravity and godly fear." As to both these propositions, there is no difference between Quakerism and Christianity. Only observe, touching the former, that the sin of "superflous apparel," lies chiefly in the *superfluous expense*. To make it therefore a point of conscience, to differ from others, as to the *shape* or *colour* of your apparel, is mere superstition: let the difference lie in the *price*, that you may have the more wherewith to clothe them that have none.

"It is not lawful for Christians to swear before a magistrate, nor to fight in any cause." Whatever becomes of the latter proposition, the former is no part of Christianity: for Christ himself answered upon oath before a migistrate. Yea, he would not answer till he was put to his oath; till the high priest said unto him, 'I adjure thee by the living God.'

Friend, you have a honest heart, but a weak head: you have a zeal, but not according to knowledge. You were zealous once for the love of God and man; for holiness of heart and holiness of life. You are now zealous for particular forms of speaking, for a set of phrases and opinions. Once your zeal was against ungodliness and unrighteousness, against evil tempers and evil works. Now it is against forms of prayer, against singing psalms or hymns, against appointing times of praying or preaching; against saying *you* to a single person, uncovering your head, or having too many buttons on your coat. O what a fall is here! What poor trifles are these, that now well nigh engross your thoughts! Come back, come back, to the weightier matters of the law, spiritual, rational, scriptural religion. No longer waste your time and strength in beating the air, in vain controversies and strife of words: but bend your whole soul to the growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the continually advancing in that holiness, without which you cannot see the Lord.

AN

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

TO THE

REV. MR. LAW;

OCCASIONED BY SOME OF HIS LATE WRITINGS.

REV. SIR,

IN matters of Religion I regard no writings but the inspired. Tauler, Behmen, and a whole army of mystic authors are with me nothing to St. Paul. In every point I appeal 'to the Law and the Testimony,' and value no authority but this. At a time when I was in great danger of not valuing this authority enough, you made that important observation, "I see where your mistake lies. You would have a philosophical religion; but there can be no such thing. Religion is the most plain, simple thing in the world. It is only, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' So far as you add philosophy to religion, just so far you spoil it." This remark I have never forgotten since. And I trust in God I never shall.

But have not you? Permit me, Sir, to speak plainly. Have you ever thought of it since? Is there a writer in England who so continually blends philosophy with religion? Even in tracts on *The Spirit of Prayer*, and *The Spirit of Love*, wherein, from the titles of them, one would expect to find no more of philosophy, than in the epistles of St. John? Concerning which, give me leave to observe

in general, 1. That the whole of it is utterly superfluous: a man may be full both of Prayer and Love, and not know a word of this hypothesis; 2. The whole of this hypothesis is unproved; it is all precarious, all uncertain: 3. The whole hypothesis has a dangerous tendency. It naturally leads men off from plain practical religion, and fills them with the knowledge that puffeth up, instead of the love that edifieth; and, 4. It is often flatly contradictory to Scripture, to reason, and to itself.

But over and above this superfluous, uncertain, dangerous, irrational, and unscriptural philosophy, have not you lately grieved many who are not strangers to the spirit of prayer or love, by advancing tenets in religion, some of which they think are unsupported by Scripture, some even repugnant to it? Allow me, Sir, first to touch upon your philosophy, and then to speak freely concerning these.

I. As to your philosophy, the main of your theory respects, 1. Things antecedent to the creation; 2. The creation itself; 3. Adam in Paradise; 4. The fall of man.

I do not undertake formally to refute what you have asserted on any of these heads. I dare not: I cannot answer either to God or man such an employment of my time. I shall only give a sketch of this strange system, and ask a few obvious questions.

And, 1. Of the things antecedent to the creation.

* "All that can be conceived is God, or nature, or creature." †

Is nature created, or not created? It must be one or the other; for there is no medium. If not created, is it not God? If created, is it not a creature? How then can there be three, God, nature, and creature? Since nature must coincide either with God or creature.

"Nature is in itself a hungry, wrathful fire of life." ‡—"Nature is and can be only a desire. Desire is the very

* Mr. Law's words are inclosed all along in inverted commas.

† Spirit of Prayer, P. II. p. 33. ‡ Ibid. p. 34.

being of nature." * "Nature is only a desire, because it is for the sake of something else: Nature is only a torment; because it cannot help itself to that which it wants." † "Nature is the outward manifestation of the invisible glories of God." ‡

Is not the last of these definitions contradictory to all that precede?—If desire is the very being of nature; if it is a torment, an hungry wrathful fire: how is it "the outward manifestation of the invisible glories of God?" "Nature as well as God is antecedent to all creatures." § "There is an eternal nature, as universal and as unlimited as God." ‖ Is then nature God? Or are there two eternal, universal, infinite beings?

"Nothing is before eternal nature but God." ¶ "Nothing but?" Is any thing before that which is eternal?—But how is this grand account of nature consistent with what you say elsewhere?

"Nature, and darkness, and self, are but three different expressions for one and the same thing." ** "Nature has all evil and no evil in it." Yea, †† "Nature, self, or darkness, has not only no evil in it, but is the only ground of all good." O rare darkness!

"Nature has seven chief properties, and can have neither more nor less, because it is a birth from the deity in nature." (Is nature a birth from the deity in nature? Is this sense? If it be, what kind of proof is it? Is it not *ignotum per æque ignotum?*) "For God is tri-une and nature is tri-une." ("Nature is tri-une." Is not this flat begging the question?) "And hence arise properties, three and three." (Nay, why not nine and nine?) "And that which brings these three and three into union is another property." ‡‡ Why so? Why may it not be two, or five, or nine? Is it not rather the will and power of God?

* Sp. of Love, P. I. p. 20. † P. 84. ‡ P. II. p. 62. § P. 59. ‖ P. 64. ¶ Ibid. ** P. 181. †† P. 192. ‡‡ Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 64.

"The three first properties of nature are the whole essence of that desire, which is, and is called nature," (p. 69.) How? Are the properties of a thing the same as the essence of it? What confusion is this! But if they were, can a part of its properties be the whole essence of it?

"The three first properties of nature are attraction, resistance, and whirling. In these three properties of the desire, you see the reason of the three great laws of matter and motion, and need not be told, that Sir Isaac ploughed with Jacob Behmen's heifer," (p. 37.) Just as much as Milton ploughed with Francis Quarles's heifer.

How does it appear, that these are any of the properties of nature? If you mean by nature any thing distinct from matter? And how are they the properties of desire? What a jumbling of dissonant notions is here!

"The fourth property," (you affirm, not prove), "is called fire: the fifth, the form of light and love." (What do you mean by the form of love? Are light and love one and the same thing?) "The sixth, sound or understanding." (Are then sound and understanding the same thing?) "The seventh, a life of triumphing joy," (p. 58.) Is then a life of triumphing joy, "that which brings the three and three properties into union?" If so, how can it be "the result of that union?" Do these things hang together?

To conclude this head. You say, "attraction is an incessant working of three contrary properties, drawing, resisting, and whirling!" (p. 200.) That is in plain terms, (a discovery worthy of Jacob Behmen, and yet not borrowed by Sir Isaac!) "Drawing is incessant drawing, resistance, and whirling."

II. Of the creation:

You put these words, with many more equally important, into the mouth of God himself!

"Angels first inhabited the region which is now taken up by the sun and the planets that move round him. It was then all a glassy sea, in which perpetual scenes of light and glory were ever rising and changing in obedience to

their call. Hence they fancied they had infinite power, and resolved to abjure all submission to God. In that moment they were whirled down into their own dark, fiery, working powers. And in that moment the glassy sea, by the wrathful workings of these spirits, was broke in pieces, and became a chaos of fire and wrath, thickness, and darkness," Sp. of Prayer, P. I. p. 14, &c.

I would inquire upon this, 1. Is it well for a man to take such liberty with the Most High God? 2. Is not this being immeasurably 'wise above that which is written?' Wiser than all the prophets and all the apostles put together? 3. How can any thing of this be proved? Why thus: "'Darkness was upon the face of the deep.' What can this mean, but that the fall of angels brought desolation into the very place of this world?" P. II. p. 49. What a proof!

Secondly, "The Scripture shews, that the Spirit of God entering into this darkness," (that is, into the very place where Satan reigned before,) "brought forth a new world," p. 50.

Where does it shew, that this darkness was the place where Satan reigned? I cannot find it in *my* Bible.

Thirdly, "How could the devil be called, 'The Prince of this world,' if it was not once his own kingdom?" (ibid.) May he not be so called, because he *now* reigns therein? Is he not *now* 'the ruler of the darkness,' or wickedness, 'of this world?'

Fourthly, "Had it not been their own kingdom, the devils could have no power here. This may pass for a demonstration, That this is the very place in which the angels fell," p. 51. I doubt, it will not pass. Cannot God permit Satan to exert his power, wherever it pleaseth him?

Hitherto then we have not a grain of sound proof. Yet you pronounce with all peremptoriness, "The grounds of true religion cannot be truly known but by going so far back as *this* fall of angels," p. 37, 38. Cannot? Positively, cannot? How few men in England, in Europe, can or do

go back so far? And are there none but these, no not one, who knows the grounds of true religion?

"It was their revolt which brought wrath, and fire, and thickness, and darkness into nature," (ibid.) If it was sin that brought fire into the world, (which is hard to prove) did it bring darkness? And thickness too? But if it did what harm is there in either? Is not thickness as good in its place as thinness? And as to darkness you say yourself "It has not only no evil in it, but is the only ground of all possible good."

Touching creation in general you aver, "A creation out of nothing is no better sense than a creation into nothing," (p. 60.) "A creation into nothing" is a contradiction in terms. Can you say a creation out of nothing is so? It is indeed tautology: since the single term creation is equivalent with production out of nothing. "That all things were created out of nothing, has not the least tittle of Scripture to support it," (p. 55.) Is it not supported (as all the Christian church has thought hitherto) by the very first verse of Genesis?

"Nay, it is a fiction big with the grossest absurdities. It is full of horrid consequences. It separates every thing from God. It leaves no relation between God and the creature. For, (mark the proof!) "if it is created out of nothing, it cannot have something of God in it," (p. 58.) The consequence is not clear. Till this is made good, can any of these propositions be allowed?

"Nature is the first birth of God." Did God create it or not? If not, how came it out of him? If he did, did he create it out of something, or nothing?

"St. Paul says, All things are of, or out of God."—And what does this prove, but that God is the cause of all things?

"The materiality of the angelic kingdom was spiritual," (Sp. of Prayer, P. II. p. 27.) What is spiritual materiality? Is it not much the same with immaterial materiality?—"This spiritual materiality brought forth the heavenly flesh and blood of angels," (p. 57.) That angels have bodies

you affirm elsewhere. But are you sure, they have flesh and blood? Are not the angels spirits? And surely a 'spirit hath not flesh and blood.'

"The whole glassy sea was a mirror of beauteous forms, colours, and sounds perpetually springing up, having also fruits and vegetables, but not gross, as the fruits of the world. This was continually bringing forth new figures of life; not animals, but ideal forms of the endless divisibility of life." (P. I. p. 18, 19.) This likewise is put into the mouth of God. But is nonsense from the Most High?

What less is "a mirror of beauteous sounds?" And what are "figures of life?" Are they alive or dead? Or between both? As a man may be between sleeping and waking? What are "ideal forms of endless divisibility of life?" Are they the same with those forms of stones, one of which Maraton took up (while he was seeking Yaratilda,) to throw at the form of a lion? See the Spectator.

"The glassy sea being become thick and dark, the spirit converted its fire and wrath into sun and stars, its dross and darkness into earth, its mobility into air, its moisture into water," P. II. p. 29.

Was wrath converted into sun or stars? Or a little of it bestowed on both? How was darkness turned into earth? Or mobility into air? Has not fire more mobility than this? Did there need omnipotence, to convert fire into fire? Into the Sun? Or moisture into water?

"Darkness was absolutely unknown to the angels till they fell. Hence it appears, that darkness is the ground of the materiality of nature," (p. 33.) Appears? To whom? Nothing appears to me, but the proving *ignotum per ignotius*.

"All life is a desire," (Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 198.) Every desire, as *such*, is, and must be made up of contrariety," (ibid.) "God's bringing a sensible creature into existence, is the bringing the power of desire into a creaturely state." Does not all this require a little more proof? And not a little illustration?

"Hard and soft, thick and thin could have no existence

till nature lost its first purity. And this is the one true origin of all the materiality of this world. Else nothing thick or hard could ever have been," (P. I. p. 21.) Does not this call for much proof? Since most people believe, God created matter, merely because 'so it seemed good in his sight.'

But you add a kind of proof. "How comes a flint to be so hard and dark? It is because the meekness and fluidity of the light, air, and water are not in it," (ibid.) The meekness of light, air, and water! What is that? Is air or water capable of virtue?

"The first property of nature is a constraining, attracting, and coagulating power," (p. 24.) I wait the proof of this.

"God brought gross matter out of the sinful properties of nature, that thereby the fallen angels might lose all their power over them," (p. 27.) And have they lost all power over them? Is Satan no longer 'prince of the power of the air?'

"As all matter is owing to the first property of nature, which is an astringing, compressing desire," (p. 28.)—Stop here, Sir. I totally deny, that any unintelligent being is capable of any *desire* at all. And yet this gross, capital mistake runs through your whole theory.

"The fourth property is fire," (p. 49.) Where is the proof?—"which changes the properties of nature into an heavenly state," (p. 48.) Proof again. "The conjunction of God and nature brings forth fire." This needs the most proof of all.

"Every right kindled fire must give forth light." Why? "Because the eternal fire is the effect of supernatural light." Nay then *light* should rather give forth *fire*. "The fire of the soul and that of the body has but one nature," (p. 52.) Can either Behmen or Spinosa prove this?

III. Of Adam in Paradise.

"Paradise is an heavenly birth of life," (Sp. of Prayer, P. I. p. 6.) How does this definition explain the thing defined?

"Adam had at first both an heavenly and an earthly body. Into the latter was the spirit of this world breathed, and in this spirit and body did the heavenly spirit and body of Adam dwell," (p. 7.) So he had originally two bodies and two souls! This will need abundance of proof. "The spirit and body of this world was the medium, through which he was to have commerce with this world." The proof. "But it was no more alive in him, than Satan and the serpent were alive in him at his first creation. Good and evil were then only in his outward body and in the outward world." What was there evil in the world, and even in Adam, together with Satan and the serpent, at his first creation? "But they were kept unactive by the power of the heavenly man within him:" Did this case cover the earthly man? Or the earthly case the heavenly?

But "he had power to choose, whether he would use his outward body only as a mean of opening the outward world to him."—So it was not quite *unactive* neither; "or of opening the bestial life in himself, (p. 9.) Till this was opened in him, nothing in this outward world, no more than his own outward body:" (so now it is *unactive* again,) "could act upon him, make any impressions upon him, or raise any sensations in him; neither had he any feeling of good or evil from it." All this being entirely new, we must beg clear and full proof of it.

"God said to man at his creation, rule thou over this imperfect, perishing world, without partaking of its impure nature," (p. 21.) Was not the world then at first *perfect* in its kind? Was it *impure* then? Or would it have *perished* if man had not sinned? And are we sure that God spake thus?

"The end God proposed in the creation, was the restoring all things to their glorious state," (P. II. p. 61.) In the creation? Was not this rather the end which he proposed in the redemption?

"Adam was created to keep what is called the curse, covered and overcome by Paradise. And as Paradise concealed and overcame all the evil in the elements, so Adam's

heavenly man concealed from him all the evil of the earthly nature that was under it," (p. 62.) Can we believe that there was any *evil* in man from the creation, if we believe the Bible?

"Our own good spirit is the very Spirit of God: and yet not God, but the Spirit of God kindled into a creaturely form." Is there any meaning in these words? And how are they consistent with those that follow? "This spirit is so related to God, as my breath is to the air," (p. 195.) Nay, if so, your spirit *is* God. For your breath *is* air.

"That Adam had at first the nature of an angel is plain from hence, that he was both male and female in one person. Now this (the being both male and female) is the very perfection of the angelic nature," (p. 65.) Naturalists say, that *snails* have this *perfection*. But who can prove, that *angels* have?

You attempt to prove it thus: "'In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels.' Here we are told, 1. That the being male and female in one person, is the very nature of angels. 2. That man shall be so too at the resurrection. Therefore he was so at first," (p. 66.)

Indeed, we are not told here, that angels are hermaphrodites. No, nor any thing like it. The whole passage is, 'They who are accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels;' (Luke xx. 35, 36,) namely, (not in being male and female, but) in this, that they 'cannot die any more.' This is the indisputable meaning of the words. So this whole proof vanishes into air.

You have one more thought, full as new as this. "All earthly beasts are but creaturely eruptions of the disorder that is broken out from the fallen spiritual world. So earthly serpents are but transitory out-births of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath," (Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 207.) How shall we reconcile this with the Mosaic account?

'And God said, Let the earth bring forth cattle, and creeping thing, and beast. And God made the beast of the earth; and God saw that it was good,' Gen. i. 24, 25. Does any thing here intimate, that beasts or serpents literally crept out of the womb of sin? And what have serpents in particular, to do with covetousness? Or indeed with envy, unless in poetic fables?

IV. Of the Fall of Man.

"Adam had lost much of his perfection, before Eve was taken out of him. 'It is not good,' said God, that 'man should be alone.' This shews that Adam had now made *that* not to be good, which God saw to be good when he created him," (Sp. of Pr. p. 74.) Nay, does it shew either more or less than this, that it was not conducive to the wise ends God had in view, for man to remain single?'

"God then divided the human nature, into a male and female creature. Otherwise man would have brought forth his own likeness out of himself, in the same manner as he had a birth from God. But Adam let in an adulterous love of the world: by this his virginity was lost, and he had no longer a power of bringing forth a birth from himself," (p. 75.) We have no shadow of proof for all this.

"This state of inability is called, his falling into a deep sleep," (p. 76.) How does this agree with 'The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam?' Gen. ii. 21.

"God took his Eve out of him, as a lesser evil to avoid a greater. For it was a less folly, to love the female part of himself, than to love things lower than himself," p. 77.

Who can extract this out of the words of Moses? Who can reconcile it with the words of our Lord? 'He who made them at the beginning' (not a word of any previous fall) 'made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife,' Matt. xix. 4, 5. Is here any intimation, that for a man to love his wife, is only less folly than to love the world? 'A man ought so to love his wife, even as

Christ the church.' Is there any folly in the love of Christ to the church?

"Marriage came in by Adam's falling from his first perfection," (p. 78.) Does this account do honour to that institution? Any more than that memorable saying of an eminent mystic, "Marriage is but licensed whoredom."

"Had Adam stood, no Eve would have been taken out of him. But from Eve God raised that angelic man, whom Adam should have brought forth without Eve, who is called The Second Adam, as being both male and female," (p. 79.) Many things here want proof. How does it appear, 1. That Eve would not have been, had Adam stood? 2. That had he stood, he would have brought forth the Second Adam without Eve? 3. That Christ was both male and female? And, 4. That he was on this account called The Second Adam?

"The Second Adam is now to do that which the first should have done," (p. 84.) Is he to do no more than that? No more than a mere creature should have done? Then what need is there of his being any more than a creature? What need of his being God?

"Our having from him a new heavenly flesh and blood, raised in us by his spiritual power, is the strongest proof, that we should have been born of Adam by the same spiritual power," (p. 85.) Had Adam then the very same spiritual power, which Christ had? And would he, if he had stood, have transmitted to us the very same benefit? Surely none that believes the Christian revelation will aver this in cool blood!

"From Adam's desire turned toward the world, the earth got a power of giving forth an evil tree. It was his will which opened a passage for the evil hid in the earth," (I know not how it came there before Adam fell,) "to bring forth a tree in its own likeness. No sooner was it brought forth, than God assured him that death was hid in it: a plain proof that this tree was not from God, but from a power in the earth, which could not shew itself, till Adam desired to taste something which was not paradisiacal," p. 96.

This is the marvellous in the highest degree, and affords many questions not very easy to be answered. But waving all these, can any thing be more flatly contradictory to the Mosaic account? We read there, 'The Lord God formed man,' (Gen. ii. 7.) 'And the Lord planted a garden,' (ver. 8.) 'And out of the ground made the Lord God every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil,' (ver. 9.) Is it not here plainly taught, that this tree was from God? That not the desire of Adam, but the Lord God made this tree to grow, as well as the tree of life? And when was it that God gave him that solemn warning, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die?' (ver. 17.) Not as soon as that tree was brought forth; but when Adam was put into the garden.

"At first all the natural properties of man's creaturely life were hid in God, just as the natural qualities of darkness are hid, till glorified by the light," (Spirit of Love, part II. p. 181.) Nay, were they not sufficiently hid by the heavenly man? Need they be hid over and over?

"But when man fell, all these properties broke forth, just as the darkness when it has lost the light, must shew forth its own coldness, horror, and other uncomfortable qualities." *Exemplum placet!* But are either coldness or horror, natural qualities of darkness? If so, they must be inseparable from it. But who will affirm this?

"Darkness, though contrary to light, is yet absolutely necessary to it. Without this no manifestation or visibility of light could possibly be." This is absolutely new and surprising. But how is it to be proved?

Thus: "God dwelleth in the light which no man can approach. Therefore light cannot be manifested to man but by darkness," (p. 189.) Ah poor consequence! Would not the same text just as well prove transubstantiation?

"Light and darkness do every thing, whether good or evil, that is done in man. Light is all power, light is all things, and nothing," (ibid.) I cannot conceive what ideas you affix to the terms, light and darkness. But I forget.

You except against ideas. Can you teach us to think without them?

Once more. You say, "Darkness is a positive thing, and has a strength and substantiality in it," (p. 182.) I have scarcely met with a greater friend to darkness, except "the illuminated Jacob Behmen."

But, Sir, have you not done him an irreparable injury? I do not mean by misrepresenting his sentiments, (though some of his profound admirers are positive, that you misunderstand and murder him throughout:) but by dragging him out of his awful obscurity; by pouring light upon his venerable darkness? Men may admire the deepness of the well, and the excellence of the water it contains. But if some officious person puts a light into it, it will appear to be both very shallow and very dirty.

I could not have borne to spend so many words on so egregious trifles, but that they are mischievous trifles:

Hæ nugæ seria ducunt
In mala.

This is dreadfully apparent in your own case, (I would not speak, but that I dare not refrain,) whom notwithstanding your uncommon abilities, they have led astray in things of the greatest importance. Bad philosophy has, by insensible degrees, paved the way for bad divinity: in consequence of this miserable hypothesis, you advance many things in religion also, some of which are unsupported by Scripture, some even repugnant to it.

II. Some of these I shall now mention with the utmost plainness, as knowing for whom, and before whom I speak.

And, 1. You deny the omnipotence of God.

You say, "As no seeing eye could be created, unless there was antecedent to it, a natural visibility of things."—Why not? Why might not visible things be created at the same instant with it?—"So no creature could come into any natural life, unless such a state of nature was antecedent to it," (p. 60.) "All that God does, is and must be done in and by the powers of nature," (p. 135.) What

then did it avail, that, as you elsewhere say, God was before nature? He not only could not then do all things, but he could do nothing, till nature existed. But if so, how came nature itself, this second eternal, to exist at all?

"There cannot possibly be any other difference between created beings, than arises from that out of which they were created," (p. 60.) Why not? Who will stay the hand of the Almighty, or say unto him, What dost thou?

"No fruits or vegetables could have sprung up in the divided elements, but because they are parts of that glassy sea, where angelical fruits grew before," (Spirit of Prayer, part I. p. 19.) But how came those fruits to grow before? How came they to grow in the glassy sea? Were they not produced out of nothing at first? If not, God was not before nature. If they were, cannot he still produce out of nothing whatsoever pleaseth him?

"All outward nature being fallen from heaven"—That we deny—"must, as well as it can, do and work as it did in heaven," (p. 20.) "As well as it can!" What can *it* do without God? Who upholdeth all things by the word of his power! And what can it not do, if he pleaseth? Or rather, what cannot he do, with or without it?

"Matter could not possibly be, but from sin," (Spirit of Love, part I. p. 23.) That is, in very plain terms, God could not have created matter, if Satan had not sinned! "God could not create man with a soul and a body, unless there was such a thing as nature, antecedent to the creation of man," p. 20.

Why could not God do this? Because "body and spirit are not two separate things, but are only the inward and outward condition of one and the same being. Every creature must have its own body, and cannot be without it. For its body is that"—Who would have thought it?—"which makes it manifest to itself. It cannot know, either that it is, or what it is, but by its own body!" (p. 32.) What a heap of bold assertions is here, to curb Omnipotence! And not one of them has a tittle of proof, unless one can prove the other.

But we have more still. "The body (of any creature) has nothing of its own, but is solely the outward manifestation of that which is inwardly in the soul. Every animal has nothing in its outward form or shape, but that which is the form and growth of its spirit. As no number can be any thing else, but that which the units contained in it make it to be, so no body can be any thing else but the coagulation or sum total of those properties of nature that are coagulated in it," p. 33.

Astonishing! What a discovery is this! That a body is only a curdled spirit! That our bodies are only the sum total of our spiritual properties: and that the form of every man's body is only the form of his spirit made visible!

"Every spirit manifests its own nature by that body which proceeds from it as its own birth," (Spirit of Love, part II. p. 17.) Does the body then grow out of the spirit, as the hair and nails grow out of the body? And this, in consequence of the "powers of nature," distinct from the power and will of God?

To abridge God of his power, after creation, as well as before it, you affirm farther, "This is an axiom that cannot be shaken, nothing can rise higher than its first created nature; and therefore an angel at last must have been an angel at first. Do you think it possible for an ox to be changed into a rational philosopher? Yet this is as possible as for one who has only by creation the life of this world, to be changed into an angel of heaven. The life of this world can reach no farther than this world: no omnipotence of God can carry it farther. Therefore if man is to be an angel at last, he must have been created an angel: because no creature can possibly have any other life or higher degree of life, than that which his creation brought forth in him," Spirit of Prayer, part II. p. 81.

I have quoted this passage at some length, that the sense of it may appear beyond dispute. But what divinity! And what reasoning to support it! Can God "raise nothing higher than its first created state?" Is it not possible for him to "change an ox" or a stone into a rational phi-

losopher, or a child of Abraham? To change a man or a worm into an angel of heaven? Poor omnipotence which cannot do this! Whether he will, or not, is another question. But if he cannot do it, how can he be said to do 'whatsoever pleaseth him, in heaven, and in earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places?' Thus does your attachment to a miserable philosophy, lead you to deny the almighty power of God.

II. It leads you, in the second place, to deny his justice, to abridge this no less than his power.

This I may be permitted to consider more at large; because though it was allowed by all the wiser Heathens of past ages, yet it is now one main hinge on which the controversy between Christianity and Deism turns. To convert a thousand Deists, therefore, by giving up this point, with the doctrine of Justification which is built upon it, is little more than it would be to convert as many Jews, by allowing the Messiah is not yet come. It is converting them by allowing all they contend for; by granting them the main point in question. Consequently it is no other than *establishing* Deism, while it pretends to overturn it.

I would greatly wish, in weighing what you have advanced on this head, to forget who speaks, and simply consider what is spoken. The person I greatly reverence and love; the doctrine I utterly abhor, as I apprehend it to be totally subversive of the very essence of Christianity.

God himself hath declared, that in consequence of his justice, he will, in the great day of retribution, 'render to every man according to his works, whether they be good or evil.' But man says no. "There is no righteous wrath or vindictive justice in God," (Spirit of Love, part II. p. 108.) If so, ye may go on, ye children of the devil, in doing the works of your father. It is written indeed, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.' But this is not literally to be taken; for, properly speaking, there is no such thing as the 'wrath of God!'

Fear not the bug-bear of 'everlasting burnings.' There

is not only no *everlasting* punishment, but no punishment at all; no such thing in the universe. It is a mere vulgar error!

I should be extremely glad to prophesy these smooth things too, did not a difficulty lie in the way. As nothing is more frequently or more expressly declared in Scripture, than God's anger at sin, and his *punishing* it both temporally and eternally, every assertion of this kind strikes directly at the credit of the whole revelation. For if there be one falshood in the bible, there may be a thousand; neither can it proceed from the God of truth. However, I will weigh all your assertions. And may the God of truth shine on both our hearts!

I must premise, that I have no objection to the using the words *wrath* (or *anger)* and *justice* as nearly synonymous; seeing anger stands in the same relation to justice, as love does to mercy: love and anger being the passions (speaking after the manner of men) which correspond with the dispositions of mercy and justice. Whoever therefore denies God to be capable of wrath or anger, acts consistently in denying his justice also.

You begin, 1. "No wrath (anger, vindictive justice) ever was or ever will be in God," (Spirit of Prayer, part I. p. 27.) If a wrath of God were any where, it must be every where." So it is, as sure as the *just* God is every where.

2. "Wrath and pain dwell only in the creatures," (p. 28.). Pain is only in creatures. Of wrath we are to inquire farther.

3. "To say God ever punished any creature out of *wrath*, is as absurd as to say, he began the creation out of wrath." I conceive not. It is not *as absurd* to say, God is angry at the *guilty*, as to say, God is angry at the *innocent*. Now it is certain, when God began the creation of man, no guilty men were in being.

4. "He must always will that to his creatures, which he willed at the creation of them." True. And he willed,

at the very creation of men, 'to reward every one as his work should be.'

5. "God is incapable of willing pain to any creature, because he is nothing but goodness," (p. 29.) You mean, because his goodness excludes justice. Nay, that is the very question.

6. "God can give nothing but happiness from himself, because he hath nothing else in himself," (Spirit of Love, part I. p. 3.) As if you had said, "God can give nothing but infinity from himself, because he has nothing else in himself." It is certain he has not. He is all infinity. Yet the argument will not hold.

7. "God can no more begin to have any wrath after the creature is fallen, than he could be infinite wrath and rage from all eternity," (part II. p. 4.) No changing the terms. We have nothing to do with *rage*. This properly means excessive anger. Setting this aside, I answer to the argument, God was infinitely just from all eternity: in consequence of which his anger then began to shew itself, when man had sinned.

8. "No wrath can be in God, unless God was from all eternity an infinity of wrath," (p. 6.) That is, infinitely just. So he was and will be to all eternity.

9. "There must be either no possibility of wrath, or no possibility of its having any bounds," (p. 7.) The divine justice cannot possibly have any bounds. It is as unlimited as his power.

10. "Two things shew the nature of wrath, a tempest and a raging sore. The former is wrath in the elements; the latter is wrath in the body. Now both these are a disorder. But there is no disorder in God. Therefore, there is no wrath in God," p. 13.

"A tempest is wrath in the elements; a raging sore is wrath in the body." It is not. Neither the body, the elements, nor any thing inanimate is capable of wrath. And when we say, "The sore looks angry," does any one dream this is to be taken literally? The pillars of the argument

therefore are rotten. Consequently the superstructure falls to the ground.

In vain would you prop it up by saying, "Wrath can have no other nature in body than it has in spirit, because it can have no existence in body, but what it has from spirit," (p. 15.) Nay, it can have no existence in body at all, as yourself affirm presently after. Yet you strangely go on, "There is but one wrath in all outward things, animate or inanimate." Most true; for all wrath is in animals; things inanimate are utterly incapable of it.

"There can be but one kind of wrath, because nothing can be wrathful but spirit," (p. 18.) Never then let us talk of wrathful elements, of wrathful tempests, or sores, again.

11. "Wrath and evil are but two words for the same thing," (ibid.) This is home. But it cannot be granted without proof.

12. "God is as capable of wrath, as of thickness, hardness, and darkness; because wrath can exist no where else but in thickness, hardness, and darkness," (p. 71.) So far from it, that wrath cannot exist in thickness or hardness at all. For these are qualities of bodies: and "nothing can be wrathful but spirit."

13. "Wrath cannot be in any creature, till it has lost its first perfection," (p. 72.) That remains to be proved.

Thus far you have advanced arguments for your doctrine. You next attempt to answer objections. And to the objection, that Scripture speaks so frequently of the wrath of God, you answer,

1. "All the wrath and vengeance that ever were in any creature, is to be called and looked on as the wrath and vengeance of God." I totally deny that proposition, and call for the proof of it.

2. "God works every thing in nature. Therefore all death, or rage, or curse, wherever it is, must be said, in the language of Scripture, to be the wrath or vengeance of God," (p. 55.) I deny the consequence. The latter proposition

does not follow from the former. And indeed it is not true. All death, and rage, and curse, is not in the language of Scripture termed the wrath and vengeance of God.

3. "Because the devils have their life from God; therefore their cursed, miserable, wrathful life, is said to be the curse, and misery, and wrath of God upon them," (p. 53.) Neither can this be proved, that the devils having their life from God, is the reason why they are said to be under his wrath. Nor does the Scripture ever term their wrathful miserable life, the wrath or misery of God.

4. "Devils are his, as well as holy angels. Therefore all the wrath and rage of the one must be as truly his wrath and rage burning in them, as the joy of the others is his joy," (p. 54.) So it seems, "The wrath of God" in Scripture means no more or less than "the wrath of the devil!" However, this argument will not prove it. The joy of saints (not of angels that I remember) is styled, The joy of their Lord, because he prepared it for them and bestows it on them. Does he prepare and bestow the rage of devils upon them.

5. "His wrath and his vengeance are no more in God, than what the psalmist calls *his ice* and *his frost*," (p. 74.) There is nothing parallel in the case. We cannot take the latter expressions literally, without glaring absurdity: the former we may.

6. "The earth trembled because he was wroth. No wrath here but in the elements." Nay, if so, here was no wrath at all. For we are agreed, "Only spirits can be wrathful."

7. One more text, usually cited against your opinion, you improve into an argument for it. 'Avenge not yourselves, for vengeance is mine.' "This is a full proof that the vengeance is not in God. If it was, then it would belong to every child of God, or he could not 'be perfect as his Father is perfect,'" (p. 76.) Yes, he could, in all his imitable perfections. But God has peculiarly forbidden our imitating him in this. 'Vengeance,' says he, 'is mine,' incommunicably mine; unless so far as he delegates it to

those who are in authority. This therefore clearly shews, that God executes vengeance, though justice, not vengeance, is properly in him.

Having now proved (as you suppose) that God has neither anger nor justice, it remains only to shew, (which indeed follows by easy and natural consequence) that he never did, nor can punish.

"To say Adam's miserable state was a punishment inflicted upon him by God, is an utter absurdity, (Spirit of Prayer, part I. p. 24.) His sin had not the least punishment of any kind inflicted upon it by God," (p. 26.) This is flat and plain. But let us see how far this account agrees with that which God himself hath given.

'Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat: in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' (Gen. ii. 17.) 'And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not die,' (ch. iii. 4.) 'And the woman, being deceived, did eat,' (1 Tim. ii. 14,) 'and gave unto her husband and he did eat,' (Gen. iii. 6.) 'And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed—Dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life,' (ver. 14.) 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,' ver. 15.

'Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and (that is, in) thy conception,' (ver. 16.) 'And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast eaten of the tree, cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life,' (ver. 17.) 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,' ver. 19.

Can any man read this and affirm, "God did not inflict the least punishment of any kind, either on Eve or Adam, or the serpent?" With what eyes or understanding then must he read?

But you say, "All that came on Adam was implied in what he chose to himself," (p. 25.) It was. He chose it to himself in the same sense, that he who robs chooses to be hanged. But this does not at all prove, that the death which one or the other suffers is no punishment.

You go on. "Fire and brimstone, or manna, rained on the earth, are only one and the same love," (Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 72.) "It was the same love that preserved Noah, burnt up Sodom, and overwhelmed Pharaoh in the Red Sea," (p. 78.) Surely nothing can equal this, unless you add, (which indeed you must do, to be consistent with yourself,) "It is one and the same love which will say, 'Come ye blessed,' and, 'Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

You add, "'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.' Here you have God's own word for it, nothing but love chasteneth," (p. 81.) We know his love chasteneth his children. Of these only God is speaking here, appears from the latter clause of the sentence. And yet we cannot say even as to them, It is nothing but his love. It is mercy mixed with justice.

You cite one text more: 'I have smitten you: yet have ye not returned to me,' (Amos iv. 9:) and say, "Now how is it possible for words to give stronger proof?" (ibid.) Proof of what? Not that God did not punish them: but that 'in the midst of wrath he remembered mercy.'

To these texts of Scripture, (wide enough of the point,) you subjoin, "The doctrine of atonement made by Christ is the strongest demonstration, that the wrath to be atoned, cannot be in God," (p. 85.) Who talks of "wrath to be atoned?" "The wrath to be atoned" is neither sense nor English; though it is a solecism you perpetually run into: (I hope not on purpose to puzzle the cause): that the sin to be atoned cannot be in God we all allow; but it does not affect the question.

Once more, to silence all contradiction at once, to stop the mouths of all gainsayers, you say, "This (that there is no *anger*, no vindictive *justice* in God, no *punishment* at all inflicted by him,) is openly asserted, constantly affirmed and repeated in the plainest letter of Scripture." Whether this, or the very reverse is true, will appear, from a few out of numberless texts, which I shall barely set down, without any comment, and leave to your cool consideration.

You say, I. There is no vindictive, avenging, or punitive *justice* in God. II. There is no *wrath* or *anger* in God. III. God inflicts no *punishment* on any creature, neither in this world, nor that to come.

God says,

I. 'The *just* Lord is in the midst of you,' (Zeph. iii. 5.) '*Justice* and judgment are the habitation of thy throne,' (Psalm lxxxix. 14.) 'Wilt thou condemn him that is most *just?*' (Job xxxiv. 17.) 'He is excellent in power and in plenty of *justice*,' (Job xxxvii. 13.) '*Just* and true are thy ways, O King of saints,' (Rev. xv. 3.) 'Thou art *just* in all that is brought upon us,' (Neh. ix. 33.) 'There is no God beside me, a *just* God and a Saviour,' Isaiah xlv. 21. 'Whom God hath set forth, that he might be *just* and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,' (Rom. iii. 25, 26.)

II. 'The Lord heard their words and was *wroth*,' (Deut. i. 34.) 'The Lord was *wroth* with me for your sakes,' (Chap. iii. 26.) 'I was *wroth* with my people,' (Isa. xlvii. 6.) 'For his covetousness I was *wroth*,' (Chap. lvii. 17.) 'And the *anger* of the Lord was kindled against Israel,' (Num. xxv. 3.) 'His *wrath* is against them that forsake him,' (Ezra viii. 22.) 'Thou art very *wroth* with us,' (Lam. v. 20.) 'Thou art *wroth*, for we have sinned,' (Isa. lxiv. 5.) 'Who may stand in thy sight, when thou art *angry?*' (Psalm lxxiv. 7.) 'I have mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine *indignation*, and thy *wrath*,' (Psalm cii. 9, 10.) 'In my *wrath* I smote thee,' (Isa. lx. 10.) 'He hath visited in his *anger*,' (Job xxxv. 15.) 'God distributeth sorrow in his *anger*,' (Ch. xxii. 17.) 'I have seen affliction by the rod of his *wrath*,' (Lam. iii. 1.) 'I sware in my *wrath*, they shall not enter into my rest,' (Psl. xcv. 11.) 'He casteth upon them the fierceness of his *anger*, *wrath*, and *indignation*—He made a way to his *anger*, he spared not their soul from death,' (Psl. lxxviii. 49, 50.) 'At his *wrath* the earth shall tremble,' (Jer. x. 10.) 'The land is desolate because of his *anger*,' (Ch. xxv. 38.) 'By

his *anger* they are consumed,' (Job iv. 9.) 'The Lord shall swallow them up in his *wrath*, and the fire shall devour them,' (Psalm xxi. 9.) 'The Lord turned not from his *wrath*,' (2 Kings xxiii. 26.) 'For all this his *anger* is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still,' (Isa. v. 25.) 'The Lord is slow to *anger*, and of great kindness; he will not always chide, neither keepeth he his *anger* for ever,' (Psal. ciii. 8, 9.) 'The Lord turned from the fierceness of his *anger*," (Josh. vii. 26.) 'In *wrath* remember mercy,' (Hab. iii. 2.) 'Though thou wast *angry*, thine *anger* is turned away,' (Isa. xii. 1.) 'Many a time turned he his *anger* away,' (Psal. lxxvii. 38.)

III. 'I will *punish* the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity,' (Isa. xiii. 11.) 'Behold the Lord cometh to *punish* the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity,' (Chr. xxvi. 21.) 'Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange *punishment* to the workers of iniquity?' (Job xxxi. 3.) 'I will *punish* you according to the fruit of your doings,' (Jer. xxi. 14.) 'I will *punish* you for all your iniquities,' (Amos iii. 2.) 'If ye will not hearken unto me, then I will *punish* you seven times more for your sins,' (Lev. xxvi. 18. 'I will *punish* all that oppress them,' (Isa. xxx. 20.)

Now, which am I to believe, God or man?

Your miserable philosophy leads you, in the third place, totally to deny the Scripture doctrine of justification. Indeed you do not appear to have the least conception of the matter: no, not even to know what the term *justification* means. Accordingly you affirm,

I. "Salvation (which as all divines agree, includes both justification and sanctification) is nothing else but to be made like Christ," (Sp. of Pr. P. I. p. 53.) 2. "Regeneration is the whole of man's salvation," (P. II. p. 37.) 3. "Redemption is nothing else but the life of God in the soul," (P. I. p. 79.) 4. "The one only work of Christ as your Redeemer is, to raise into life the smothered spark of heaven in you," (Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 45.) 5. "He is our atonement and reconciliation with God, because by

him we are set again in our first state of holiness," (P. II. p. 86.) 6. "The atonement of the divine wrath or justice," (a mere solecism, on which your whole reasoning for several pages is built) "and the extinguishing of sin in the creature, are only different expressions of the same thing," (p. 106.) (Nay the former is an expression of nothing: it is flat nonsense.) 7. "All that Christ does as an atonement, has no other operation but that of renewing the fallen nature of man," (p. 21.)

Here are seven peremptory assertions. But till they are fully proved, I cannot give up my Bible.

But you grow bolder and bolder; and say, "The satisfaction of Christ is represented in all our systems of divinity, as a satisfaction made to God, and the sufferings and death of Christ, as that which could only avail with God to have mercy on man. Nay, what is still worse, if possible, the ground, and nature, and efficacy of this great transaction between God and man, is often explained by debtor and creditor: man as having contracted a debt with God, which he could not pay, and God as having a right to insist upon the payment of it," (p. 106.) "There is no wrath in God, no fictitious atonement, no folly of debtor and creditor," (p. 131.) "What is still worse if possible! Folly of debtor and creditor!" Surely I would not have spoken thus, unless I had been above the Son of God.

'After this manner pray ye, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,' (Matt. vi. 9, 12.) 'And Jesus said, There was a certain creditor which had two debtors,' (Luke vii. 41.) 'The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take account of his servants. And one was brought unto him who owed him ten thousand talents. But for as much as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold and all that he had. The servant fell down, saying, Lord, have patience with me. And his Lord was moved with compassion, and forgave him the debt.' Yet afterwards on his unmercifulness to his fellow-servant, he retracted that forgiveness; 'and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him. So

likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you also, if ye from your heart forgive not every one his brother their trespasses,' Matt. xviii. 23, &c.

Is not a man here represented "as having contracted a debt with God, which he cannot pay?" And God "as having" nevertheless "a right to insist upon the payment of it?" And a right, 'if he hath not to pay, of delivering him to the tormentors? And is it not expressly asserted, that God will, in some cases claim this right, and use it to the uttermost? Upon whom then lights this imputation of folly, and of what is still worse? 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!' 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

But if the Son of God did not die to atone for our sins, what did he die for?

You answer, "He died, 1. To extinguish our own hell within us," (Sp. of Pr. P. II. p. 159.) Nay, the Scripture represents this, not as the first, but the second end of his death.

"2. To shew that he was above the world, death, hell, and Satan," (p. 130, 131.) Where is it written, that he died for this end? Could he not have done this without dying at all?

"3. His death was the only possible way of overcoming all the evil that was in fallen man," (p. 129.) This is true, supposing that he atoned for our sins. But if this supposition be not made, his death was not the only possible way whereby the Almighty could have overcome all things.

"4. Through this he got power to give the same victory to all his brethren of the human race," (p. 132.) Had he not this power before? Otherwise, how was he ὁ ὢν, 'He that is; God over all; blessed for ever?' If Christ died for no other ends than these, what need was there of his being more than a creature?

As you seem never to have employed your thoughts on justification or redemption, in the Scripture sense, I beg leave to subjoin a plain account thereof, written by a woman of the last century.

1. *'Christ hath acquired for us a right to eternal life by his satisfaction and merits alone. Neither our repentance nor amendment, can be any satisfaction for sin. It is only 'through his blood that we have redemption,' (Eph. i. 7.) This alone 'cleanseth us from all sin,' (1 John i. 7.) And herein 'was the love of God manifested towards us, that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,' (1 John iv. 9, 10.) So was the 'Lord our righteousness,' (Jer. xxiii. 6;) without which we could not have been justified. As man owed his Creator the perfect obedience of his whole life, or a punishment proportioned to his transgression, it was impossible he could satisfy him, by a partial and imperfect obedience. Neither could he merit any thing from him, to whom he owed all things. There was need, therefore, of a Mediator, who could repair the immense wrong he had done to the Divine Majesty, satisfy the Supreme Judge, who had pronounced the sentence of death against the transgressors of his law, suffer in the place of his people, and merit for them pardon, holiness, and glory. Accordingly he 'gave himself a ransom for all.' (1 Tim. ii. 6:) and, 'by himself purged our sins,' (Heb. i. 3.) 'He loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God,' (Eph. v. 2.) So we read, 'God raised him from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification:' because our Surety's being discharged, by the will and act of the Judge himself, is a full proof that he has paid our whole debt.

2. 'Nor is there any more sure way to the imitation of Christ, than faith in Christ crucified, in him 'who suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we might tread in his steps:' 'who died for us, while we were yet enemies, that we might be justified by his blood,' (Rom. v. 9.) Yet it is true this doctrine finds no place in those who are proud of heart, who love their own reasonings, and have no taste

* Annæ Mariæ a Schurman Ἔυλογια, Part II. p. 118, &c.

for 'the sincere milk of the word.' But it is precious to them who feel the weight of their sins, who know they 'are by nature children of wrath,' and at the same time utterly incapable either of paying the debt, of rising from the death of sin, of conquering themselves, the world, and the devil, or of meriting eternal life.

3. 'The origin and cause of our redemption is, the ineffable love of God the Father, who willed to redeem us by the blood of his own Son: the grace of the Son, who freely took our curse upon him, and imparts his blessing and merits to us. And the Holy Spirit who communicates the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son to our hearts.

'When we speak of this, and of the satisfaction of Christ, we speak of the inmost mystery of the Christian faith. Therefore all the inventions of men ought now to be kept at the utmost distance; nor can any thing certain be established, without the express authority of Scripture. And herein is offered first to our consideration, the only begotten Son of God, as the head of the redeemed, the righteous servant of God, who by the 'knowledge' of himself 'shall justify many,' (Isa. liii. 11.) Him God hath constituted the 'Surety of that better Covenant,' (Heb. vii. 22,) the covenant of grace. And how clearly is his execution of this office described in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah? Where the prophet describes him as 'bearing our griefs,' or sins, 'and carrying our sorrows,' (ver. 4.) 'All we,' says he, 'like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,' (ver. 6.) All mankind have forsaken God, and placed their own will upon his throne, and so were liable to the highest punishment, when the Mediator voluntarily interposed himself between them and the just Judge. And the incomprehensible love of God that he might spare them, 'spared not his own Son.' This is shewn in those words, 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' It was on this account that 'he was oppressed and afflicted; and brought as a lamb to the slaughter,' (ver. 7,) while God 'made him to be sin for us,

who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' (2 Cor. v. 21.) This is expressed in the 9th and 10th verses.—'He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him,' when he 'made his soul an offering for sin.' How exactly do his own words agree with these! 'I am the good Shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep,' (John x. 14, 15.) For them 'was he taken from prison and from judgment, and cut off out of the land of the living,' (ver. 8.) How doth God herein 'commend his love toward us, in delivering up his own Son to die for us?' Yea, God 'was pleased with bruising him,' when clothed with our flesh, and bearing our sins, he manifested to angels and men his infinite love of divine justice, till being 'made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' he satisfied its utmost demand.

'It was then God 'was pleased to bruise him,' when 'he made his soul an offering for sin.' He then appeared before the Judge of all, under 'the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,' as the apostle speaks. And, therefore, God was pleased 'to condemn sin in the flesh,' (Rom. viii. 3, 4,) to 'bruise him' who sustained the person of sinners. But this was only the prelude of a glorious victory. Therefore the prophet adds, 'He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand,' (ver. 10.) After repeating (ver. 11,) the sum of all, 'He shall bear their iniquities,' he subjoins the cause of his reward, (ver. 12,) 'Because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: for he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.'

'The fifth verse, of which I have not yet spoken, renders this great truth still more evident. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.' He loved his own body less than his mystical body the church, and therefore gave the former for the latter, 'to redeem and purchase it with his own blood,' by

paying himself as a ransom for it. Hereby 'nailing the hand-writing which was against us to the cross, he took it out of the way,' and so became 'our peace.'

4. 'From all which it appears, that Christ was not only a pattern, but first and principally the surety of the new covenant, yea, a sacrifice and a victim, for the sins of his people: 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood,' (Rom. iii. 25.) And that precious sacrifice offered on the cross, is the very centre and marrow of the gospel. To that 'one offering' whereby our great High Priest 'hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' (Heb. x. 14.) all the ancient sacrifices referred, as well as numberless other types and figures. 'All these,' says the apostle, 'were shadows of things to come, but the body is Christ,' (Col. ii. 17.) He it was, who 'not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood entered into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption for us,' (Heb. ix. 12.) In consequence of this we are accepted, 'through the offering of the body of Christ once for all,' (chap. x. 10.) In all the ancient types and figures 'without shedding of blood there was no remission:' which was intended to shew there never could be any without the blood of the great Antitype: without that grand propitiatory sacrifice, which (like the figure of it) was to be offered 'without the gate.'

'Indeed the whole worship of the Old Testament teaches nothing else but the satisfaction made by the blood of Christ, and our reconciliation with God thereby: hence he is styled 'The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;' with a view to the paschal lamb, and the other lambs that were offered in sacrifice: on which account the inhabitants of heaven likewise 'give glory and sing a new song, because he hath redeemed them unto God by his blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,' Rev. v. 9.

5. 'To this might be added the numerous figures that occur in the lives of the old patriarchs, prophets, and kings. But it may suffice to add to the preceding only two testi-

monies more of the manner of our redemption by a proper sacrifice: the one that of St. Paul, Christ 'hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; as it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' Gal. iii. 1. The other of St. Peter, 'Who himself bore our sins, in his own body on the tree,' (1 Pet. ii. 24.) From all this abundantly appears the substitution of the Messiah in the place of his people, thereby atoning for their sins, and restoring them to the favour of God.

'These are the points which are so vehemently opposed by Socinus and his followers; who rob Christ of the principal part of his priestly office, and leave him only that of interceding for us by prayer: as if any intercession were worthy of Christ, which had not his full satisfaction and propitiatory sacrifice for its foundation. Indeed these cannot be put asunder, as sufficiently appears from the words cited before, 'He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors: where the Holy Ghost closely joins his intercession, with his satisfaction made by sacrifice. These and a thousand other solid arguments that might be advanced in proof of this fundamental doctrine, overturn all the cavils that flow from corrupt *reason*, which, indeed, are weak and thin as a spider's web.'

I have dwelt the longer on this head, because of its inexpressible moment. For whether or not the doctrine of *justification by faith* be, as all protestants thought at the time of the reformation, *Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*, a doctrine without which there can be no Christian church: most certainly there can be none where the whole notion of justification is ridiculed and exploded: unless it be such a church as includes, according to your account, every child of man: of which consequently Turks, Deists, and Pagans are as real members, as the most pious Christian under the sun. I cannot but observe, that this is the very essence of Deism; no serious Infidel need contend for more. I would therefore no more set one of this opinion to convert Deists, than I would set a Turk to convert Mahometans.

As every one that is justified is *born of God*, I am natu-

rally led to consider, in the next place, (so far as it is delivered in the tracts now before me,) your doctrine of *the new birth.*

"In the day that Adam ate of the tree he died: that is, his heavenly spirit, with its heavenly body, were extinguished. To make that heavenly spirit and body to be alive again in man, this is regeneration," (Sp. of Prayer, P. I. p. 9.) O no; this is not; nor any thing like it. This is the unscriptural dream of Behmen's heated imagination.

"See the true reason why only the Son of God could be our Redeemer. It is because he alone could be able to bring to life again that celestial spirit and body which had died in Adam," (ibid.) Not so: but he alone could be our Redeemer, because he alone, 'by that one oblation of himself once offered, could make a sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.'

"See also why a man must 'be born again of water and of the Spirit.' He must be born again of the Spirit, because Adam's heavenly spirit was lost," (ibid.) Nay, but because Adam had lost the inward image of God, wherein he was created. And no less than the almighty Spirit of God could renew that image in his soul.

"He must be born of water, because that heavenly body which Adam lost was formed out of the heavenly materiality, which is called water," (ibid.) Vain philosophy! The plain meaning of the expression, 'Except a man be born of water,' is neither more nor less than this, 'Except he be baptized.' And the plain reason why he ought to be thus born of water is, because God hath appointed it. He hath appointed it as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace: which grace is, 'a death unto sin, and a new-birth unto righteousness.'

"The necessity of our regaining our first heavenly body is the necessity," (I presume you mean the ground of the necessity,) "of our eating the body and blood of Christ," (p. 10.) Neither can I believe this, till I find it in the bible. I am there taught to believe, that our 'spiritually receiving the body and blood of Christ,' which is most eminently done in the Lord's supper, is necessary to

'strengthen and refresh our souls, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.'

"The necessity of having again our first heavenly spirit is shewn, by the necessity of our being baptized with the Holy Ghost," (ibid.) No. That we 'must be baptized with the Holy Ghost,' implies this and no more, that we cannot be 'renewed in righteousness and true holiness,' any otherwise than by being over-shadowed, quickened, and animated by that blessed Spirit.

"Our fall is nothing else but the falling of our soul from its heavenly body and spirit, into a bestial body and spirit. Our redemption," (you mean, our new birth) "is nothing else but the regaining our first angelic spirit and body," (ibid.) What an account is here of the Christian redemption! How would Dr. Tindal have smiled at this! Where you say redemption is nothing else but the life of God in the soul, you allow an essential part of it. But here, you allow it to be nothing else but that which is no part of it at all: nothing else but a whim, a madman's dream, a chimera, a mere non-entity!

"This" (Angelic spirit and body) "in Scripture is called our new or inward man," (ibid.) The inward man in Scripture means one thing, the new man another. The former means the mind opposed to the body:' 'though our outward man,' our body, 'perish, yet the inward man,' the mind or soul 'is renewed day by day,' (2 Cor. iv. 16.) The latter means universal holiness: 'put off the old man which is corrupt; and put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness,' (Eph. iv. 22--24.) But neither does the one nor the other ever mean this angelic spirit and body.

You yourself know better what the new-birth is. You describe it better, though still with amazing queerness of language, where you say, "Man hath the light and water of an outward nature to quench the wrath of his own life, and the light and meekness of Christ, as a seed born in him, to bring forth anew the image of God."

But it is not strange, that you speak so confusedly and

darkly, as you generally do, of the New-Birth, seeing you seem to have no conception of that faith whereby we are born again. This abundantly appears from your frank declaration, "We are neither saved by faith nor by works," (Part II. p. 36.) Flatly contrary to the declaration of St. Paul, 'By grace we are saved through faith.'

To put the matter out of dispute, you declare that you mean by faith, "a desire to be one with Christ," (P. I. p. 50.) Again. "The desire of turning to God is the coming of Christ into the soul. This faith will save thee," (p. 76.) So in your judgment, saving faith is, "a desire of coming to God, or of being one with Christ." I know the contrary from experience. I had this desire many years before I even knew what saving faith was.

Faith is so far from being only this desire, that it is no desire at all. It differs from all desire *toto genere*, although doubtless all good desires accompany it. It is, according to St Paul, an ἔλεγχος, an *evidence* or *conviction*, (which is totally different from a *desire*,) *of things not seen*: a supernatural, a divine *evidence* and *conviction* of the things which God hath revealed in his word; of this in particular, that the Son of God hath loved *me* and given himself for *me*. Whosoever hath this faith is born of God. Whosoever thus believeth is saved; and if he endure therein 'to the end' shall be saved everlastingly.

The process of this work in the soul, of the present salvation which is through faith, you likewise describe confusedly and obscurely. The sum of what you say is this: "The painful sense of what you are, kindled into a working state of sensibility by the light of God, is the light and fire from whence the spirit of prayer proceeds. In its first kindling nothing is found but pain, wrath, and darkness. And, therefore, its first prayer is all humility," (P. II. p. 172.)

Would it not be more intelligible, if one had said, 'The convincing Spirit of God, gives you to see and feel, that you are a poor, undone, guilty, helpless sinner. At the same time, he incites you to cry for help to him who is

mighty to save.' This is true. But it is not true, that in the first kindling of this fire, in plain terms, during the first convictions, "nothing is found but pain, wrath, and darkness." Very often there are found even in the first conviction, sweet gleams of light, touches of joy, of hope, and of love, mixed with sorrow and fear. Much less is it true, that the first prayer of an awakened sinner is all humility, (ibid.) On the contrary, a sinner newly awakened, has always more or less confidence in himself, in what he is, or has, or does, and will do: which is not humility, but downright pride. And this mingles itself with all his prayer till the day-star is just rising in his heart.

You add, "This prayer is met by the divine love, and changed into hymns, and songs, and thanksgivings," (ibid.) It is so, when 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' "The state of fervour melts away all earthly passions and affections, and leaves no inclination in the soul, but to delight in God alone," (ibid.) It is certain, this is the genuine effect of 'the love of God shed abroad in the heart;' which expression of St. Paul, I suppose means the same with this state of fervour. "Then its prayer changes again, and continually stands in fulness of faith, and purity of love, in absolute resignation, to do and be what and how his Beloved pleaseth. This is the last state of the spirit of prayer, and is our highest union with God, in this life," (p. 173.)

Assuredly it is: fulness of faith, 'beholding with open face the glory of the Lord;' purity of love, free from all mixture of its contrary, yielding the whole heart to God; absolute resignation, excluding every degree of self-will, sacrificing every thought, word, and work to God. But do we change directly, from our first love, into the highest union with God? Surely not. There is an intermediate state between that of babes in Christ, and that of fathers. You yourself are very sensible there is; although you here speak as if there were not.

You go on. "People who have long dwelt in this fer-

vour, are frighted when coldness seizes upon them," (p. 174.) That is, when they lose it, when their love grows cold. And certainly, well they may, if this fervour was to bring them to "fulness of faith, purity of love, and absolute resignation." Well may they be affrighted, if that fervour be lost, before "it has done its work."

Indeed they might be affrighted, when it is not lost, if that which follows be true. "Fervour is good and ought to be loved; but distress and coldness are better," (p. 176.) "It brings the soul nearer to God, than the fervour did," (p. 175.) The fervour, you said, "brought the soul to its highest union with God in this life." Can coldness do more? Can it bring us to an union, higher than the highest?

To explain this you say, "The fervour made the soul delight in God. But it was too much an own delight. It was a fancied self-holiness, and occasioned rest and satisfaction in itself, in a spiritual self," (ibid.) Either fervour does bring us to purity of love, and absolute resignation, or not. To say, it does not, contradicts what you said but now. And if it does, we cannot say, "Coldness does the work which fervour did, in an higher degree."

I should not insist so long on these glaring inconsistencies, were not the doctrine you are here labouring to support, absolutely inconsistent with that of St. Paul, and naturally productive of the most fatal consequences. St. Paul asserts, the present 'kingdom of God' in the soul 'is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' He continually teaches, that these which God hath joined, man ought not to put asunder: that peace and joy should never be separated from righteousness, being the divine means both of preserving and increasing it, and that we may, yea, ought to 'rejoice evermore,' till 'the God of peace sanctifies us wholly.' But if these things are so, then "Distress and coldness are not better" than fervent love and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Again. The doctrine, that it is better and more profitable for the soul, to lose its sense of the love of God than

to keep it, is not only unscriptural, but naturally attended with the most fatal consequences. It directly tends to obstruct, if not destroy the work of God in the heart, by causing men to bless themselves in those ways, which damp the fervour of their affections; and to imagine they are considerably advanced in grace, when they have grieved, yea, quenched the Spirit. Nay, but let all who now feel the love of God in their hearts, and 'walk in the light, as he is in the light,' labour by every possible mean to 'keep themselves in the love of God.' Let them be ever 'fervent in spirit.' Let them 'rejoice evermore,' and stir up the gift of God, which is in them. And if at any time, "Coldness seizes upon them," let them be assured, they have 'grieved the Spirit of God.' Let them be affrighted: let them fear lest they sink lower and lower: yea, into total deadness aud hardness of heart. At the peril of their souls, let them not rest in darkness, but examine themselves, search out their spirits, cry vehemently to God, and not cease, till he restores the light of his countenance.

5. If this doctrine of the unprofitableness of *coldness* above fervor, directly tends to make believers easy, while they are sliding back into unbelief, you have another which tends as directly to make them easy who never believed at all, I mean, that of *Christ in every man.* What you advanced on this head, I desire next to consider, as the importance of it requires.

"The birth of Christ is already begun in every one. Jesus is already within thee, (whoever thou art,) living, stirring, calling, knocking at the door of thy heart," (Spirit of Prayer, part I. p. 55.) "Every one has Christ in his spirit, lying there as in a state of insensibility and death," (Spirit of Love, part II. p. 34.) But he is living for all that. And though "in a state of insensibility," he is "stirring, calling, knocking at the door of the heart!"

"Something of heaven" (you use this phrase as equivalent with Christ) "lies in every soul in a state of inactivity and death," (p. 35.) "All the holy nature, tempers, and Spirit of Christ, lie hid as a seed in thy soul," (Spirit of

Prayer, part. I. p. 68.) But are they active or inactive? *Living* and *stirring*, or in a state of *insensibility* and *death*?

"Thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable, while all the peace and joy of God are within thee," (p. 74.) This is most wonderful of all! Are these within him who is dead in sin? Who is a "stranger to all that is holy and heavenly?" If they are, how can he be miserable, who has "all the peace and joy of God within him?" Will you say, "They are in him, but he does not feel them?" Nay, then they are not in him. I have peace in me, no longer than I feel peace. I feel joy, or I have it not.

"See here the extent of the catholic church of Christ! It takes in all the world," (p. 56.) So Jews, Mahometans, Deists, Heathens, are all members of the church of Christ! Should we not add devils too? Seeing these also are to dwell with us in heaven!

"Poor sinner, Christ dwelleth in the centre, the ground, or bottom of thy soul," (p. 59.) What is this? What is either the *centre*, the *top*, or *bottom* of a spirit!

"When Adam fell, this centre of his soul became a prisoner in an earthly animal. But from the moment God spoke Christ into Adam, all the treasures of the divine nature, the light and Spirit of God came again into man, into the centre of his soul," (p. 60.) I cannot find in the bible when that was; when God spoke Christ into Adam.

We come now to the proofs of these strong assertions.

And, 1. "No faith could ever begin, unless every man had Christ in him," (Spirit of Love, part II. p. 34.) This proposition needs just as much proof itself, as that which it is brought to prove.

2. "Unless the remains of the perfect love of God were in every man, it would be impossible he should ever love God at all," (p. 88.) Why so? Cannot God give his love this moment to one who never loved him before?

3. "Unless Christ was hidden in the soul, there could not be the least beginning of man's salvation. For what could begin to desire heaven, unless something of heaven were hid in the soul?" What could? Why any soul, which

had nothing but hell in it before the moment grace was infused from above.

4. "The ten commandments lay hid in men's souls," (how?) "till called into sensibility by writing them on stone. Just so Christ lies in the soul, till awakened by the mediatorial office of the holy Jesus," (p. 35.) This is only assertion still, not proof. But what do you mean by the *mediatorial* office of Christ? And how is "Christ awakened by the mediatorial office of the Holy Jesus?"

5. "The sea cannot be moved by any other wind than that which had its birth from the sea itself," (p. 40.) I think it can. I have seen it "moved by a wind, which had its birth from the land."

6. "The musician cannot make his instrument give any other melody than that which lies hid in it, as its own inward state," (p. 42.) Did the tune then lie hid in the trumpet, before the trumpeter blew? And was this tune, or another, or all that ever were and will be played on it, the *inward state* of the trumpet?

"No more can the mind have any grief or joy, but that which is from itself," (p. 43.) An unhappy comparison! For the instrument can have no melody or sound at all *from itself*: and most unhappily applied to the operations of God upon the souls of men. For has God no more power over my soul, than I have over a musical instrument?

These are your arguments to prove that Christ is in every man; a blessing which St. Paul thought was peculiar to believers. He said, 'Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates, (unbelievers.) You say, Christ *is in you*, whether ye be reprobates or not. 'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,' saith the Apostle. Yea, but "every man," saith Mr. Law, "hath the Spirit of God. The Spirit of Christ is in every soul," (Spirit of Prayer, P. I. p. 63.) 'He that hath not the Son of God hath not life,' saith St. John. But Mr. Law saith, "Every man hath the Son of God." Sleep on then, ye Sons of Belial, and take your rest: ye are all safe: for 'he that hath the Son hath life.'

There can hardly be any doctrine under heaven more agreeable to flesh and blood: nor any which more directly tends, to prevent the very dawn of conviction, or at least to hinder its deepening in the soul, and coming to a sound issue. None more naturally tends to keep men asleep in sin, and to lull asleep those who begin to be awakened. Only persuade one of this, "Christ is already in thy heart; thou hast now the inspiration of his Spirit: all the peace and joy of God are within thee, yea, all the holy nature, tempers, and Spirit of Christ:" and you need do no more: the syren song quiets all his sorrow and fear. As soon as you have sewed this pillow to his soul, he sinks back into the sleep of death.

VI. But you have made an ample amends for this, by providing so short and easy a way to heaven: not a long, narrow, troublesome, round-about path, like that described in the bible: but one that will as compendiously save the soul, as Dr. Ward's *pill and drop* heal the body: a way so plain, that they who follow it need no bible, no human teaching, no outward means whatever; being every one able to stand alone; every one sufficient for himself!

"The first step is, To turn wholly from yourself, and to give up yourself wholly unto God," (P. II. p. 22.) If it be, no flesh living shall be saved. How grievously do we stumble at the threshold? Do you seriously call this, *The first step?* "To *turn wholly* from myself, and *give up myself wholly* unto God?" Am I then to step first on the highest round of the ladder? Not unless you turn it upside down. The way to heaven would be short indeed, if the first and the last step were all one: if we were to step as far the moment we set out, as we can do till we enter into glory.

But what do you mean by *giving up myself* to God? You answer, "Every sincere wish and desire after Christian virtues, is giving up yourself to him, and the very perfection of faith," Spirit of Love, P. II. p. 217.

Far, very far from it; I know from the experience of a thousand persons, as well as from Scripture, and the very

reason of the thing, that a man may have sincere desires after all these, long before he attains them. He may sincerely wish, to give himself up to God, long before he is able so to do. He may desire this, not only before he has the perfection, but before he has any degree of saving faith.

More marvellous still is that which follows, "You may easily and immediately, by the mere turning of your mind, have all these virtues, patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God," (p. 212.) Who *may?* Not I. Not you. Not any that is born of a woman: as is proved by the daily experience of all, that know what patience, meekness, or resignation means.

But how shall I know whether I have faith or not? "I will give you an infallible touchstone. Retire from all conversation only for a month. Neither write, nor read, nor debate any thing with yourself. Stop all the former workings of your heart and mind, and stand all this month in prayer to God. If your heart cannot give itself up in this manner to prayer, be fully assured you are an Infidel," Spirit of Prayer, P. II. p. 163.

If this be so, the Infidels are a goodly company! If every man be of that number, who cannot "stop all the former workings of his heart and mind, and stand thus in prayer to God for a month together."

But I would gladly know, by what authority you give us this touchstone? And how you prove it to be infallible? I read nothing like it in the oracles of God. I cannot find one word there of "refraining from all conversation, from writing and reading for a month." (I fear, you make no exception, in favour of public worship, or reading the word of God.) Where does the bible speak of this? Of "stopping for a month, or a day, all the former workings of my heart and mind? Of refraining from all converse with the children of God, and from reading his word? It would be no wonder should any man make this unscriptural (if not anti-scriptural) experiment, if Satan were permitted to

work in him 'a strong delusion,' so that he should 'believe a lie.'

Nearly related to this touchstone is the direction which you give elsewhere. "Stop all self-activity; be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to the inward light," P. I. p. 77, 82.

But beware 'the light which is in thee be not darkness;' as it surely is, if it agree not with 'the law and the testimony.' "Open thy heart to all its impressions,"—If they agree with that truly infallible touchstone. Otherwise regard no impression of any kind, at the peril of thy soul—"wholly stopping the workings of thy own reason and judgment." I find no such advice in the word of God. And I fear they who stop the workings of their reason, lie the more open to the workings of their imagination.

There is abundantly greater danger of this when we fancy we have no longer need to "be taught of man." To this your late writings directly lead. One who admires them will be very apt to cry out, "I have found all that I need know of God, of Christ, of myself, of heaven, of sin, of grace, and of salvation," (P. II. p. 4.) And the rather, because you yourself affirm roundly, "when once we apprehend the all of God, and our own nothingness," (which a man may persuade himself he does, in less than four and twenty hours,) "it brings a kind of infallibility into the soul in which it dwells; all that is vain, and false, and deceitful, is forced to vanish and flee before it," (P. I. p. 95.) Agreeably to which you tell your convert, "You have no questions to ask of any body," (Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 218.) "And if, notwithstanding this, he will ask, "But how am I to keep up the flame of love?" You answer, "I wonder you should want to know this. Does a blind, or sick, or lame man want to know, how he should desire sight, health, or limbs?" (Spirit of Prayer, p. 165.) No, but he wants to know, how he should attain, and how he should keep them. And he who has attained the love of God, may still want to know how he shall keep it. And he may still inquire, "May I not take

my own passions, or the suggestions of evil spirits for the workings of the Spirit of God?" (p. 198.) To this you answer, "Every man knows, when he is governed by the spirit of wrath, envy, or covetousness, as easily and as certainly as he knows when he is hungry," (ibid.) Indeed he does not; neither as *easily* nor as *certainly*. Without great care, he may take wrath to be pious zeal, envy to be virtuous emulation; and covetousness to be Christian prudence, or laudable frugality. "Now the knowledge of the Spirit of God in yourself is as perceptible as covetousness." Perhaps so; for this is as difficultly perceptible as any temper of the human soul.—"And liable to no more delusion." Indeed it need not; for this is liable to ten thousand delusions.

You add, "His Spirit is more distinguishable from all other spirits, than any of your natural affections are from one another," (p. 199.) Suppose joy and grief. Is it more distinguishable from all other spirits, than these are from one another? Did any man ever mistake grief for joy? No, not from the beginning of the world. But did none ever mistake nature for grace? Who will be so hardy as to affirm this?

But you set your pupil as much above the being taught by books, as the being taught by men. "Seek, say you, for help no other way, neither from men, nor books, but wholly leave yourself to God," Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 225.

But how can a man "leave himself wholly to God," in the total neglect of his ordinances? The old bible way is, to "leave ourselves wholly to God," in the constant use of all the means he hath ordained. And I cannot yet think the new is better, though you are fully persuaded it is. "There are two ways, you say, of attaining goodness and virtue; the one by books or the ministry of men, the other by an inward birth. The former is only in order to the latter." This is most true, that all the externals of religion, are in order to the renewal of our soul in righteousness and true holiness. But it is not true, that the external way is one, and the internal way another. There is but one scrip-

tural way, wherein we receive inward grace, through the outward means which God hath appointed.

Some might think that when you advised, "Not to seek help from books," you did not include the bible. But you clear up this, where you answer the objection, of your not esteeming the bible enough. You say, "How could you more magnify John the Baptist, than by going from his teaching, to be taught by that Christ, to whom he directed you? Now the bible can have no other office or power, than to direct you to Christ. How then can you more magnify the bible than by going from its teaching, to be taught by Christ?" So you set Christ and the bible in flat opposition to each other! And is this the way we are to learn of him? Nay, but we are taught of him, not by going from the bible, but by keeping close to it. Both by the bible and by experience we know, that his word and his Spirit act in connection with each other. And thus it is, that by Christ continually teaching and strengthening him through the Scripture, 'The man of God is made perfect, and thoroughly furnished for every good word and work.'

According to your veneration for the bible, is your regard for public worship and for the Lord's Supper, "Christ, you say, is the church or temple of God within thee. There the Supper of the Lamb is kept. When thou art well grounded in this inward worship, thou wilt have learned to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to thee; and wherever thou goest, thou wilt have a priest, a church, and an altar along with thee," Spirit of Prayer, P. I. p. 73.

The plain inference is, thou wilt not need to make any difference between Sunday and other days. Thou wilt need no other church than that which thou hast always along with thee; no other Supper, worship, priest, or altar. Be well grounded in this inward worship, and it supersedes all the rest. This is right pleasing to flesh and blood, and I could most easily believe it, if I did not believe the bible. But that teaches me inwardly to worship God, as at all times, and in all places, so particularly on his own day, in

the congregation of his people, at his altar, and by the ministry of those his servants whom he hath given for this very thing, 'for the perfecting of the saints,' and with whom he will be 'to the end of the world.'

Extremely dangerous therefore is this other gospel, which leads quite wide of the gospel of Christ. And what must the consequence be, if we thus break, yea, and teach men so, not one only, neither the least of his commandments? Even that we 'shall be called the *least* in the kingdom of heaven.' God grant this may not fall on you or me!

7. However, whether we have a place in heaven or not, you are very sure we shall have none in hell. For there is no hell in *rerum natura;* no such place in the universe. You declare this over and over again, in a great variety of expressions. It may suffice to mention two or three. "Hell is no penalty prepared or inflicted by God, (Spirit of Prayer, P. II. p. 33.) Damnation is only that which springs up within you, (Spirit of Love, P. II. p. 47.) Hell and damnation are nothing but the various operations of self," (Sp. of Prayer, P. I. p. 79.)

I rather incline to the account published a few years ago, by a wise and pious man, (the late bishop of Cork,) where he is speaking of the improvement of human knowledge by revelation. Some of his words are, 'Concerning future punishments, we learn from revelation only, 1. That they are both for soul and body, which are distinguished in Scripture by 'the worm that dieth not, and the fire which never shall be quenched:' and accordingly we are bid to 'fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.' (Procedure, &c. of Human Understanding.) Upon which I shall only remark, that whereas we find by experience, the body and soul in this life are not capable of suffering the extremity of pain and anguish at the same time, insomuch that the greatest anguish of mind is lost and diverted by acute and pungent pain of body: yet we learn from Scripture, that in *hell* the wicked will be subject to extreme torments of both together,' (p. 150.)

2. 'That the chief cause of their eternal misery will be, an eternal exclusion from the beatific vision of God. This exclusion seems to be the only punishment to which we can now conceive a pure spirit liable. And according as all intelligent beings are at a less or greater distance from this fountain of all happiness, so they are necessarily more or less miserable or happy.

3. 'That one part of those punishments will be by fire, than which we have not any revelation more express and positive. And as it is an instance of great goodness in God, that the joys of heaven are represented to us, under figurative images of light, and glory, and a kingdom, and that the substance shall exceed the utmost of our conception: so it is an argument of his strict justice, that future punishments are more literally threatened and foretold.

4. 'The Eternity of these punishments is revealed as plainly as words can express it. And the difficulty of that question, "What proportion endless torments can bear to momentary sins," is quite removed by considering, that the punishments denounced are not sanctions entirely arbitrary, but are withal so many previous warnings or declarations of the natural tendency of sin itself. So that an unrepenting sinner must be miserable in another life by a necessity of nature. Therefore he is not capable of mercy; since there never can be an alteration of his condition, without such a change of the whole man, as would put the natural and settled order of the creation out of course," (p. 251.)

Doubtless this eminent man (whose books on the *Human Understanding*, and on *Divine Analogy*, I would earnestly recommend to all who either in whole or in part deny the Christian Revelation,) grounded his judgment both of the nature and duration of future punishments on these and the like passages of Scripture.

'If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.' 'He that despised Moses's law died without mercy: of how much

sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?' 'For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 26--31.

And let not any, who live and die in their sins, vainly hope to escape his vengeance. 'For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment'—'The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished,' (2 Pet. ii. 4--9.) In that day, peculiarly styled 'The Day of the Lord, they that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt,' (Dan. xii. 2.) Among the latter will all those be found, who are now by their obstinate impenitence, 'treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: who will then render 'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil,' (Rom. ii. 5--9.) He hath declared the very sentence which he will then pronounce on all the workers of iniquity, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' (Matt. xxv. 41.) And in that hour it will be executed: being 'cast into outward darkness, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth,' (ver. 30.) they 'will be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power,' (2 Thess. i. 9.) A punishment not only without end, but likewise without intermission. For when once 'they are cast into that furnace of fire,' that 'lake of fire burning with brimstone, the worm' gnawing their soul 'dieth not, and the fire' tormenting their body 'is not quenched.' So that 'they have no rest day or night; but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.'

Now thus much cannot be denied, that these texts speak *as if* there were really such a place as hell, *as if* there were a real fire there, and *as if* it would remain for ever. I

would then ask but one plain question. If the case is not so, why did God speak *as if* it was? Say you, "To affright men from sin?" What, by guile? By dissimulation? By hanging out false colours? Can you possibly ascribe this to the God of truth? Can you believe it of him? Can you conceive the Most High dressing up a scare-crow, as we do to fright children? Far be it from him. If there be then any such fraud in the bible, the bible is not of God. And, indeed, this must be the result of all: if there be *no unquenchable fire, no everlasting burnings*, there is no dependence on those writings, wherein they are so expressly asserted, nor on the *eternity* of heaven, any more than of hell. So that if we give up the one, we must give up the other. No hell, no heaven, no revelation!

In vain you strive to supply the place of this, by putting *purgatory* in its room; by saying, "These virtues must have their perfect work in you, if not before, yet certainly *after death*, (Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 232.) Every thing else must be taken from you by fire, either here or hereafter," (ibid.) Poor, broken reed! Nothing will "be taken from you" by that fire which is 'prepared for the devil and his angels,' but all rest, all joy, all comfort, all hope. For 'the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'

I have now, Sir, delivered my own soul. And I have used great plainness of speech; such as I could not have prevailed on myself to use to one whom I so much respect, on any other occasion.

O that your latter works may be more and greater than your first! Surely they would, if you could ever be persuaded to study, instead of the writings of Tauler and Behmen, those of St. Paul, James, Peter, and John; to spue out of your mouth and out of your heart that *vain philosophy*, and *speak* neither higher nor lower things, neither more nor less than *the Oracles of God*: to renounce, despise, abhor all the high flown bombast, all the unintelligible jargon of the mystics, and come back to the plain religion of the bible, *We love him because he first loved us.*

London, *Jan.* 6, 1756.

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A LETTER

TO THE

REV. MR. TOOGOOD, OF EXETER;

OCCASIONED BY HIS

DISSENT FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND FULLY JUSTIFIED.

SIR,

IF you fairly represent Mr. White's arguments, they are liable to much exception. But whether they are or not, your answers to them are far from unexceptionable. To the manner of the whole I object, you are not serious: you do not write as did those excellent men, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Howe, Dr. Calamy, who seem always to speak not laughing but weeping. To the matter I object, That if your argument hold, as it is proposed in your very title-page, if "a dissent from our church be the genuine consequence of the allegiance due to Christ," then all who do not dissent, have renounced that allegiance, and are in a state of damnation!

I have not leisure to consider all that you advance, in proof of this severe sentence. I can only at present examine your main argument, which indeed contains the strength of your cause. "My separation from the Church of *England*," you say, "is a debt I owe to God, and an act of allegiance due to Christ, the only Lawgiver in the church," p. 2.

Again, "The controversy turns upon *one single point*, Has the church *power to decree rites and ceremonies?* If it has this power, then all the objections of the Dissenters, about kneeling at the Lord's Supper, and the like, are impertinent; if it has no power at all of this kind, yea, if Christ the great Lawgiver and King of the church, hath expressly commanded, that no power of this kind shall ever be *claimed* or ever be *yielded* by any of his followers: then the dissenters will have honour before God for protesting against such usurpation," p. 3.

I join issue on this single point: "If Christ hath expressly commanded, that no power of this kind shall ever be *claimed*, or ever *yielded* by any of his followers:" Then are all who yield it, all churchmen, in a state of damnation, as much as those who 'deny the Lord that bought them.' But if Christ hath not expressly commanded this, we may go to church, and yet not go to hell.

To the point then. The power I speak of is, a power of *decreeing rites and ceremonies*, of appointing such circumstantials (suppose) of public worship as are in themselves purely indifferent, being no way determined in Scripture.

And the question is, "Hath Christ expressly commanded, that this power shall never be *claimed*, nor ever *yielded* by any of his followers?" This I deny. How do you prove it?

Why thus. "If the Church of England has this power, so has the Church of Rome," (p. 4.) Allowed. But this is not to the purpose. I want "the *express command* of Christ."

You say, "Secondly, The persons who have this power in England, are not the clergy, but the parliament," (p. 8, 9.) Perhaps so. But this also strikes wide. Where is the "*express command* of Christ?"

You ask, "Thirdly, How came the civil magistrate by this power? (p. 11.) Christ commands us to 'call no man on earth father and master,' that is, to acknowledge no authority of any in matters of religion," (p. 12.) At length we are come to the express command, which, accord-

ing to *your* interpretation, is express enough: "That is, acknowledge no authority of *any* in matters of religion:" own no power in *any* to appoint any circumstance of public worship, any thing pertaining to decency and order. But this interpretation is not allowed. It is the very point in question.

We allow, Christ does here expressly command to acknowledge no such authority of any, as the Jews paid their Rabbies, whom they usually styled, either *fathers* or *masters*: implicitly believing all they affirmed, and obeying all they enjoined. But we deny, that he expressly commands, to acknowledge no authority of governors, in things purely indifferent, whether they relate to the worship of God, or other matters.

You attempt to prove it by the following words, 'One is your Master' and Lawgiver, even Christ: 'and all ye are brethren;' (Matt. xxiii. 8, 9;) "all Christians; having no dominion over one another." True: no such dominion as their Rabbies claimed: but in all things indifferent, Christian Magistrates have dominion. As to your inserting, *and Lawgiver*, in the preceding clause, you have no authority from the text: for it is not plain, that our Lord is here speaking of himself in that capacity. Διδασκαλος, the word here rendered *master*, you well know, conveys no such idea. It should rather have been translated, *teacher*. And indeed the whole text primarily relates to doctrines.

But you cite another text: 'The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them: but it shall not be so among you:' (Matt. xx. 25.) Very good: that is, Christian pastors, shall not exercise such dominion over their flocks, as Heathen princes do over their subjects. Most sure: but without any violation of this, they may appoint how *things* shall *be done decently and in order*.

"But Christ is the sole Lawgiver, Judge, and Sovereign in his church," (p. 12.) He is, the sole *Sovereign*, *Judge*, and *Lawgiver*. But it does not follow (what you continually infer) that there are no *subordinate judges* therein: nor, that there are none who have power, to make regula-

tions therein in subordination to him. King George is sovereign, judge, and lawgiver, in these realms. But are there no subordinate judges? Nay, are there not many who have power to make rules or laws in their own little communities? And how does this "invade his authority and throne?" Not at all; unless they contradict the laws of his kingdom.

"However, he alone has authority to fix the terms of communion for his followers or church, (ibid.) And the terms he has fixed no men on earth have authority to set aside or alter." This I allow (although it is another question) none has authority to exclude from the church of Christ, those who comply with the terms which Christ has fixed. But, not to admit into the society called *The Church of England*, or, not to administer the Lord's Supper to them, is not the same thing with "excluding men from the church of Christ:" unless this society be *The whole church* of Christ, which neither you nor I will affirm. This society therefore may scruple to receive those as members, who do not observe her rules in things indifferent, without pretending "to set aside or alter the terms which Christ has fixed" for admission into the Christian church: and yet without "lording it over God's heritage, or usurping Christ's throne." Nor does all "the allegiance we owe him," at all hinder our obeying them that have the rule over us, in things of a purely indifferent nature. Rather, our allegiance to *him*, requires our obedience to *them*. In being "their servants" thus far we are "Christ's servants." We obey his *general* command, by obeying our governors in *particular* instances.

Hitherto you have produced no express command of Christ to the contrary. Nor do you attempt to shew any such, but strike off from the question for the twelve or fourteen pages following. But after these you say, (p. 26,) "The subjects of Christ are expressly commanded to receive nothing as parts of religion, which are only commandments of men," (Matt. xv. 9.) We grant it: but this

is not a command, not to 'obey those who have the rule over us.' And we must obey them in things indifferent, or not at all. For in things which God hath forbidden, should such be enjoined, we dare not obey. Nor need they enjoin what God hath commanded.

Upon the whole we agree, that Christ is the only *supreme Judge and Lawgiver* in the church: I may add, and in the world: for 'there is no power,' no secular power, but of God: of God who 'was manifested in the flesh, who is over all, blessed for ever.' But we do not at all agree in the inference which you would draw therefrom, namely, that there is no *subordinate judge* or *lawgiver* in the church. You may just as well infer, That there is no subordinate judge or lawgiver in the *world*. Yea there is, both in the one and the other. And in obeying these *subordinate powers*, we do not, as you aver, renounce the *supreme:* no, but we obey them for *his* sake.

We believe, it is not only innocent, but our bounden duty so to do: in all things of an indifferent nature to 'submit ourselves to every ordinance of man;' and that for the Lord's sake: because we think, he has not forbidden, but expressly commanded it. Therefore "as a genuine fruit of our allegiance to Christ," we 'submit' both 'to the king and governors sent by him,' so far as possibly we can, without breaking some plain command of God. And you have not yet brought any plain command, to justify that assertion that "we may not submit either to the king, or to governors sent by him, in any circumstances relating to the worship of God."

Here is a plain declaration, 'There is no power but of God; the powers that exist are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,' (without an absolute necessity, which in things indifferent there is not,) 'resisteth the ordinance of God.' And here is a plain command grounded thereon: 'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.' Now by what Scripture does it appear, That we are not to be *subject* in any thing pertaining to the worship of

God? This is an exception which we cannot possibly allow, without clear warrant from Holy Writ. And we apprehend, those of the Church of Rome alone, can decently plead for such an exception. It does not sound well in the mouth of a Protestant, to claim an exemption from the jurisdiction of the civil powers, in all matters of religion, and in the minutest circumstance relating to the church.

Another plain command is that mentioned but now: 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.' And this we shall think ourselves hereby fully authorised to do, in things of a religious as well as a civil nature, till you can produce plain, explicit proof from Scripture, that we must submit in the latter, but not in the former. We cannot find any such distinction in the bible; and till we find it there, we cannot receive it. But must believe our allegiance to Christ requires submission to our governors in *all things* indifferent.

This I speak, even on supposition, that the things in question were enjoined merely by the king and parliament. If they were, what then? Then I would 'submit to them for the Lord's sake.' So that in all your parade, either with regard to king George or queen Anne, there may be *wit*, but no *wisdom*: no force, no argument, till you can support this distinction, from plain testimony of Scripture.

Till this is done, it can never be proved, that "a dissent from the Church of England (whether it can be justified from other topics or not) is the genuine and just consequence, of the allegiance which is due to Christ, as the only Lawgiver in the church." As you proposed to "bring the controversy to this short and plain issue, to let it turn on this single point:" I have done so: I have spoke to this alone; although I could have said something on many other points, which you have advanced as points of the utmost certainty, although they are far more easily affirmed than proved. But I wave them for the present: hoping this may suffice, to shew any fair and candid inquirer,

That it is very possible to be united to Christ and to the Church of England at the same time: that we need not separate from the church, in order to preserve our allegiance to Christ; but may be firm members thereof, and yet 'have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.'

I am, Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

BRISTOL, *Jan.* 10, 1758.

A

TREATISE

ON

BAPTISM.

CONCERNING BAPTISM I shall inquire, *What* it is: What *benefits* we receive by it: Whether our Saviour designed it to remain *always* in his church: And who are the proper *subjects* of it?

I. 1. What it is. It is the initiatory sacrament, which enters us into covenant with God. It was instituted by Christ, who alone has power to institute a proper sacrament, a sign, seal, pledge, and means of grace, perpetually obligatory on all Christians. We know not indeed the exact time of its institution; but we know it was long before our Lord's Ascension. And it was instituted in the room of circumcision. For as that was a sign and seal of God's covenant, so is this.

2. The *matter* of this sacrament is water; which as it has a natural power of cleansing, is the more fit for this symbolical use. Baptism is performed by *washing*, *dipping*, or *sprinkling* the person, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who is hereby devoted to the ever blessed Trinity. I say by *washing*, *dipping*, or *sprinkling*: because it is not determined in Scripture, in which of these ways it shall be done, neither by any express precept, nor by any such example as clearly proves it; nor by the force or meaning of the word, *baptize*.

3. That there is no express precept all calm men allow. Neither is there any conclusive example. John's baptism in some things agreed with Christ's, in others differed from it. But it cannot be certainly proved from Scripture, that even John's was performed by dipping. It is true, he baptized *in* Enon, *near* Salim, 'where there was much water.' But this might refer to breadth rather than depth; since a narrow place would not have been sufficient for so great a multitude. Nor can it be proved, that the baptism of our Saviour, or that administered by his disciples was by immersion. No, nor that of the eunuch baptized by Philip; though 'they both went down to the water:' for that *going down* may relate to the chariot, and implies no determinate depth of water. It might be up to their knees, it might not be above their ancles.

4. And as nothing can be determined from Scripture-precept or example, so neither from the force or meaning of the word. For the words baptize and baptism do not necessarily imply *dipping*, but are used in other senses in several places. Thus we read, that the Jews 'were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea,' (1 Cor. x. 2,) but they were not *plunged* in either. They could, therefore, be only *sprinkled* by drops of the sea-water, and refreshing dews from the cloud: probably intimated in that, 'Thou sentest a gracious rain upon thine inheritance, and refreshedest it when it was weary:' (Psalm lxviii. 9.) Again, Christ said to his two disciples, 'Ye shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with,' (Mark x. 38.:) but neither he nor they were dipt, but only sprinkled or washed with their own blood. Again we read, Mark vii. 4. of *the baptisms*, (so it is in the original,) of pots and cups, and tables or beds. Now pots and cups are not necessarily dipped when they are washed. Nay, the Pharisees washed the outsides of them only. And as for tables or beds, none will suppose they could be dipped: here then the word baptism in its natural sense, is not taken for dipping, but for washing or cleansing. And, that this is the true meaning of the word baptize, is testified by the greatest

scholars and most proper judges in this matter. It is true, we read of being 'buried with Christ in baptism.' But nothing can be inferred from such a figurative expression. Nay, if it held exactly, it would make as much for sprinkling as for plunging: since in burying, the body is not plunged through the substance of the earth, but rather earth is *poured* or *sprinkled* upon it.

5. And as there is no clear proof of dipping in Scripture, so there is very probable proof of the contrary. It is highly probable, the apostles themselves baptized great numbers, not by dipping, but by washing, sprinkling, or pouring water. This clearly represented the cleansing from sin, which is figured by baptism. And the quantity of water used was not material: no more than the quantity of bread and wine in the Lord's supper. The jailor, 'and all his house were baptized' in the prison: Cornelius with his friends, (and so several households,) at home. Now is it likely, that all these had ponds or rivers, in or near their houses, sufficient to plunge them all? Every unprejudiced person must allow, the contrary is far more probable. Again, three thousand at one time and five thousand at another, were converted and baptized by St. Peter at Jerusalem; where they had none but the gentle waters of Siloam, according to the observation of Mr. Fuller, "There were no water-mills in Jerusalem, because there was no stream large enough to drive them." The place, therefore, as well as the number, makes it highly probable that all these were baptized by sprinkling, or pouring, and not by immersion. To sum up all, the manner of baptizing (whether by dipping or sprinkling) is not determined in Scripture. There is no command for one rather than the other. There is no example from which we can conclude for dipping rather than sprinkling. There are probable examples of both; and both are equally contained in the natural meaning of the word.

II. 1. What are the *Benefits* we receive by Baptism is the next point to be considered. And the first of these is, the washing away the guilt of original sin, by the appli-

cation of the merits of Christ's death. That we are all born under the guilt of Adam's sin, and that all sin deserves eternal misery, was the unanimous sense of the ancient church, as it is expressed in the ninth article of our own. And the Scripture plainly asserts, that we were 'shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mother conceive us. That we were all by nature children of wrath, and dead in trespasses and sins:' that 'in Adam all died:' that 'by one man's disobedience all were made sinners:' that 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: which came upon all men; because all had sinned.' This plainly includes infants; for they too *die*: therefore, *they have sinned*. But not by actual sin: therefore, by original: else what need have they of the death of Christ? Yea, 'Death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those who had not sinned' (actually) 'according to the similitude of Adam's transgression.' This, which can relate to infants only, is a clear proof that the whole race of mankind, are obnoxious both to the guilt and punishment of Adam's transgression. But 'as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free-gift came upon all men, to justification of life. And in virtue of this free-gift, the merits of Christ's life and death, are applied to us in baptism. 'He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word,' (Eph. v. 25, 26:) namely, in baptism the ordinary instrument of our justification. Agreeably to this our church prays in the baptismal office, that the person to be baptized may be 'washed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and being delivered from God's wrath, receive remission of sins, and enjoy the everlasting benediction of his heavenly washing:' and declares in the rubric at the end of the office, 'It is certain, by God's word, that children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved.' And this is agreeable to the unanimous judgment of all the ancient fathers.

2. By baptism we enter into covenant with God; into that everlasting covenant, which he hath commanded for

ever, (Psal. cix. 11.) That new covenant, which he promised to make with the spiritual Israel; even to 'give them a new heart and a new spirit, to sprinkle clean water upon them,' (of which the baptismal is only a figure) 'and to remember their sins and iniquities no more:' in a word, 'to be their God,' as he promised to Abraham, in the evangelical covenant, which he made with him, and all his spiritual offspring, (Gen. xvii. 7, 8.) And as circumcision was then the way of entering into this covenant, so baptism is now: which is therefore styled by the apostle, (so many good interpreters render his words,) The *stipulation*, *contract*, or *covenant* of a good conscience with God.

3. By baptism we are admitted into the church, and consequently made members of Christ, its head. The Jews were admitted into the church by circumcision, so are the Christians by baptism. For 'as many as are baptized into Christ,' in his name, 'have' thereby 'put on Christ,' (Gal. iii. 27.) That is, are mystically *united* to Christ, and made *one* with him. For 'by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Namely, 'the church, the body of Christ,' (Eph. iv. 12.) From which spiritual, vital union with him, proceeds the influence of his grace on those that are baptized; as from our union with the church, a share in all its privileges, and in all the promises Christ has made to it.

4. By baptism we who were 'by nature children of wrath,' are made the children of God. And this regeneration which our church in so many places ascribes to baptism is more than barely being admitted into the church, though commonly connected therewith; being 'grafted into the body of Christ's church, we are made the children of God by adoption and grace.' This is grounded on the plain words of our Lord, John iii. 5, 'Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' By water then, as a mean, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again; whence it is also called by the apostle, 'The washing of regeneration.' Our church, therefore, ascribes no greater

virtue to baptism, than Christ himself has done. Nor does she ascribe it to the outward washing, but to the inward grace, which added thereto, makes it a sacrament. Herein a principle of grace is infused, which will not be wholly taken away, unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God, by long-continued wickedness.

5. In consequence of our being made children of God, we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. 'If children,' (as the apostle observes) 'then heirs, heirs with God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' Herein we receive a title to, and an earnest of, 'a kingdom which cannot be moved.' 'Baptism doth now save us,' if we live answerable thereto, if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel. Supposing this, as it admits us into the church here, so into glory hereafter.

III. 1. But did our Saviour design this should remain *always* in his church? This is the third thing we are to consider. And this may be despatched in few words, since there can be no reasonable doubt, but it was intended to last as long as the church into which it is the appointed means of entering. In the *ordinary* way, there is no other means of entering into the church or into heaven.

2. In all ages the outward baptism is a *means* of the *inward;* as outward circumcision was, of the circumcision of the heart. Nor would it have availed a Jew to say, I have the inward circumcision, and therefore do not need the outward too: that soul was to be cut off from his people. He had despised, he had broken God's everlasting covenant, by despising the seal of it, (Gen. xvii. 14.) Now the seal of circumcision was to last among the Jews as long as the law lasted, to which it obliged them. By plain parity of reason, baptism which came in its room, must last among Christians, as long as the gospel covenant into which it admits, and whereunto it obliges all nations.

3. This appears also from the original commission which our Lord gave to his apostles, 'Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them'—'And, lo I am with

you always even unto the end of the world.' Now as long as this commission lasted, as long as Christ promised to be with them in the execution of it, so long doubtless were they to execute it, and to baptize as well as to teach. But Christ hath promised to be with them, that is by his Spirit, in their successors, to the end of the world. So long therefore without dispute, it was his design, that baptism should remain in his church.

IV. 1. But the grand question is, Who are the proper subjects of baptism? Grown persons only, or infants also? In order to answer this fully, I shall, first, Lay down the grounds of infant-baptism, taken from Scripture, reason, and primitive, universal practice; and, secondly, answer the objections against it.

2. As to the grounds of it; if infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism: seeing in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has been already proved, that this original stain cleaves to every child of man; and that hereby they are children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation. It is true, the Second Adam has found a remedy for the disease which came upon all by the offence of the first. But the benefit of this, is to be received through the means which he hath appointed: through baptism in particular, which is the ordinary means he hath appointed for that purpose: and to which God hath *tied us*, though he may not have tied *himself*. Indeed where it cannot be had, the case is different: but extraordinary cases do not make void a standing rule. This, therefore, is our first ground: infants need to be washed from original sin: therefore they are proper subjects of baptism.

3. Secondly, If infants are capable of making a covenant, and were and still are under the evangelical covenant, then they have a right to baptism, which is the entering seal thereof. But infants are capable of making a covenant, and were and still are under the evangelical covenant.

The custom of nations and common reason of mankind, prove that infants may enter into a covenant, and may be obliged by compacts made by others in their names, and

receive advantage by them. But we have stronger proof than this, even God's own word, (Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12.) 'Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord—your captains, with all the men of Israel; your little ones, your wives and the stranger—that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God.' Now God would never have made a covenant with little ones, if they had not been capable of it. It is not said *children* only, but *little children*, the Hebrew word properly signifying infants. And these may be still, as they were of old, obliged to perform in after-time, what they are not capable of performing at the time of their entering into that obligation.

4. The infants of believers, the true children of faithful Abraham, always were under the gospel covenant. They were included in it, they had a right to it, and to the seal of it: as an infant heir has a right to his estate, though he cannot yet have actual possession. The covenant with Abraham was a gospel covenant, the condition the same, namely, faith: which the apostle observes was 'imputed unto him for righteousness.' The inseparable fruit of this faith was obedience; for by faith he left his country, and offered his son. The benefits were the same; for God promised, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee:' and he can promise no more to any creature; for this includes all blessings, temporal and eternal. The Mediator is the same; for it was *in his seed*, that is, in *Christ*, (Gen. xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 16.) that all nations were to be blessed: on which very account the apostle says, 'The gospel was preached unto Abraham,' (Gal. iii. 8.) Now the same promise that was made to him, the same covenant that was made with him, was made 'with his children after him,' (Gen. xvii. 7. Gal. iii. 7.) And upon that account it is called 'an everlasting covenant.' In this covenant children were also obliged to what they knew not, to the same faith and obedience with Abraham. And so they are still: as they are still equally entitled to all the benefits and promises of it.

5. Circumcision was then the seal of the covenant;

which is itself therefore figuratively termed, *The Covenant*, (Acts vii. 8.) Hereby the children of those who professed the true religion, were then admitted into it, and obliged to the conditions of it, and 'when the law was added,' to the observance of that also. And when the old seal of circumcision was taken off, this of baptism was added in its room: our Lord appointing one positive institution to succeed another. A new seal was set to Abraham's covenant: the seals differed, but the deed was the same; only that part was struck off which was political or ceremonial. That baptism came in the room of circumcision, appears as well from the clear reason of the thing, as from the apostle's argument, where, after circumcision, he mentions baptism, as that wherein God had 'forgiven us our trespasses:' to which he adds, the 'blotting out the hand writing of ordinances,' plainly relating to circumcision and other Jewish rites; which as fairly implies, that baptism came in the room of circumcision, as our Saviour's styling the other sacrament, the *passover*, (Col. ii. 11, 12, 13. Luke xxii. 15.) shews that it was instituted in the place of it. Nor is it any proof that baptism did not succeed circumcision, because it differs in some circumstances, any more than it proves the Lord's supper did not succeed the passover, because in several circumstances it differs from it. This then is a second ground. Infants are capable of entering into covenant with God. As they always were, so they still are under the evangelical covenant. Therefore they have a right to baptism, which is now the entering seal thereof.

6. Thirdly, If infants ought to *come to* Christ, if they are capable of admission into the church of God, and consequently of solemn, sacramental dedication to him, then they are proper subjects of baptism. But infants are capable of coming to Christ, of admission into the church, and solemn dedication to God.

That infants ought to *come to* Christ appears from his own words. 'They brought little children to Christ, and the disciples rebuked them. And Jesus said, Suffer little chil-

dren to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' (Matt. xix. 13, 14.) St. Luke expresses it still more strongly, (chap. xviii. 15.) 'They brought unto him even infants, that he might touch them.' These children were so little, that they were brought to him. Yet he says, 'Suffer them to come unto me:' so little that 'he took them up in his arms;' yet he rebukes those who would have hindered their coming to him. And his command respected the future as well as the present. Therefore his disciples or ministers are still to suffer infants to come, that is to be brought unto Christ. But they cannot now come to him, unless by being brought into the church: which cannot be but by baptism. Yea, and 'of such,' says our Lord, 'is the kingdom of heaven;' not of such only, as were like these infants. For if they themselves were not fit to be subjects of that kingdom, how could others be so, because they were like them? Infants, therefore, are capable of being admitted into the church, and have a right thereto. Even under the Old Testament they were admitted into it by circumcision. And can we suppose they are in a worse condition under the gospel, than they were under the law? And that our Lord would take away any privileges which they then enjoyed? Would he not rather make additions to them? This then is a third ground. Infants ought *to come to Christ*, and no man ought to *forbid* them. They are capable of admission into the church of God. Therefore they are proper subjects of baptism.

7. Fourthly, If the apostles baptized infants, then are they proper subjects of baptism. But the apostles baptized infants, as is plain from the following consideration. The Jews constantly baptized as well as circumcised all infant-proselytes. Our Lord therefore commanded his apostles, to *proselyte* or *disciple* all nations by *baptizing* them, and not forbidding them to receive infants as well as others, they must needs baptize children also.

That the Jews admitted proselytes by baptism as well as by circumcision, even whole families together, parents and

children, we have the unanimous testimony of their most ancient, learned, and authentic writers. The males they received by baptism and circumcision; the women by baptism only. Consequently the apostles, unless our Lord had expressly forbidden it, would of course do the same thing.

Indeed the consequence would hold from circumcision only. For if it was the custom of the Jews, when they gathered proselytes out of all nations, to admit children into the church by circumcision, though they could not actually believe the law or obey it; then the apostles, making proselytes to Christianity by baptism, could never think of excluding children, whom the Jews always admitted (the reason for their admission being the same) unless our Lord had expressly forbidden it. It follows, the apostles baptized infants. Therefore they are proper subjects of baptism.

8. If it be objected, there is no express mention in Scripture of any infants whom the apostles baptized: I would ask, Suppose no mention had been made in *the Acts* of those two women baptized by the apostles, yet might we not fairly conclude, that when so many thousands, so many entire households were baptized, women were not excluded? Especially since it was the known custom of the Jews to baptize them? The same holds of children: Nay more strongly, on the account of circumcision. Three thousand were baptized by the apostles in one day, and five thousand in another. And can it be reasonably supposed, that there were no children among such vast numbers? Again, the apostles baptized many families: nay, we hardly read of one master of a family, who was converted and baptized, but his whole family, (as was before the custom among the Jews,) were baptized with him. Thus the 'jailer's household,' 'he and all his:' 'the household of Caius,' of 'Stephanus,' of 'Crispus.' And can we suppose, that in all these households, which, we read, were without exception baptized, there should not be so much as one child, or infant? But, to go one step further. St. Peter says to the

multitude, Acts ii. 38, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins. For the promise is to you and to your children.' Indeed the answer is made directly, to those who asked, 'What shall we do?' But it reaches farther than to those who asked the question. And though children could not actually repent, yet they might be baptized. And that they are included appears, 1. Because the apostle addresses himself to *every one* of them, and in *every one*, children must be contained; 2. They are expressly mentioned, 'The promise is to you and to your children.'

9. Lastly, If to baptize infants has been the general practice of the Christian church in all places and in all ages, then this must have been the practice of the apostles, and consequently the mind of Christ. But to baptize infants has been the general practice of the Christian church, in all places and in all ages. Of this we have unexceptionable witnesses. St. Austin for the Latin church, (who flourished before the year 400,) and Origen for the Greek, (born in the second century,) both declaring, not only that the whole church of Christ did then baptize infants, but likewise that they received this practice from the apostles themselves. *(August. de Genesi, Lib.* 10. c. 23. *Orig. in Rom.* 6.) St. Cyprian likewise is express for it, and a whole council with him. *(Epis. ad Fidum.)* If need were we might cite likewise Athanasius, Chrysostom, and a cloud of witnesses. Nor is there one instance to be found in all antiquity, of any orthodox Christian, who denied baptism to children when brought to be baptized: nor any one of the fathers, or ancient writers, for the first eight hundred years at least, who held it unlawful. And that it has been the practice of all regular churches ever since is clear and manifest. Not only our own ancestors when first converted to Christianity, not only all the European churches, but the African too and the Asiatic, even those of St. Thomas in the Indies, do and ever did baptize their children. The fact being thus cleared, that infant-baptism has been the general practice of the Christian church in all

places and in all ages, that it has continued without interruption in the church of God for above seventeen hundred years, we may safely conclude, it was handed down from the apostles, who best knew the mind of Christ.

10. To sum up the evidence; if outward baptism be generally, in an ordinary way necessary to salvation, and infants may be saved as well as adults, nor ought we to neglect any means of saving them: if our Lord commands such to *come*, to be *brought* unto him, and declares, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven:' if infants are capable of making a covenant, or having a covenant made for them by others, being included in Abraham's covenant, (which was a covenant of faith, an evangelical covenant) and never excluded by Christ: if they have a right to be members of the church, and were accordingly members of the Jewish: if, suppose our Lord had designed to exclude them from baptism, he must have expressly forbidden his apostles to baptize them (which none dares to affirm he did) since otherwise they would do it of course, according to the universal practice of their nation: if it is highly probable they did so, even from the letter of Scripture, because they frequently baptized whole households, and it would be strange, if there were no children among them: if the whole church of Christ for seventeen hundred years together baptized infants, and were never opposed till the last century but one, by some not very holy men in Germany: Lastly, If there are such inestimable benefits conferred in baptism, the washing away the guilt of original sin, the ingrafting us into Christ, by making us members of his church, and thereby giving us a right to all the blessings of the gospel: it follows, that infants may, yea, ought to be baptized, and that none ought to hinder them.

I am, in the last place, to answer those objections, which are commonly brought against infant-baptism.

1. The chief of these is: "Our Lord said to his apostles, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' Here Christ himself put *teaching* before *baptizing*.

Therefore infants being incapable of being *taught*, are incapable of being *baptized*.

I answer, 1. The order of words in Scripture, is no certain rule for the order of things. We read in St. Mark i. 4. 'John baptized in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance.' And, ver. 5. 'They were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.' Now either the order of words in Scripture does not always imply the same order of things; or it follows, that John baptized before his hearers either confessed or repented. But, 2. the words are manifestly mistranslated. For if we read, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them—teaching them to observe all things, it makes plain tautology, vain and senseless repetition. It ought to be translated (which is the literal meaning of the words) *Go and make disciples of all nations, by baptizing them.* That infants are capable of being made proselytes or disciples, has been already proved. Therefore this text, rightly translated, is no valid objection against infant baptism.

2. Their next objection is, "The Scripture says, 'Repent and be baptized;' 'Believe and be baptized.' Therefore repentance and faith ought to go before baptism. But infants are incapable of these. Therefore they are incapable of baptism."

I answer, repentance and faith were to go before circumcision, as well as before baptism. Therefore, if this argument held, it would prove just as well, that infants were incapable of circumcision. But we know God himself determined to the contrary, commanding them to be circumcised at eight days old. Now if infants were capable of being circumcised, notwithstanding that repentance and faith, were to go before circumcision in grown persons, they are just as capable of being baptized; notwithstanding that repentance and faith are in grown persons to go before baptism. This objection, therefore, is of no force: for it is as strong against the circumcision of infants as infant-baptism.

3. It is objected, thirdly, "There is no command for it in Scripture." Now God was angry with his own people,

because they did that, which he said, 'I commanded them not,' (Jer. vii. 31.) One plain text would end all the dispute."

I answer, 1. We have reason to fear it would not. It is as positively commanded in a very plain text of Scripture, that we should 'teach and admonish one another with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to the Lord with grace in our hearts,' (Eph. v. 14,) as it is to honour our father and mother. But does this put an end to all dispute? Do not these very persons absolutely refuse to do it, notwithstanding a plain text, an express command?

I answer, 2. They themselves practise what there is neither express command, nor clear example for in Scripture. They have no express command for baptizing women. They say indeed, "Women are implied in all nations." They are; and so are infants too: but the command is not express for either. And for admitting women to the Lord's supper, they have neither express command, nor clear example. Yet they do it continually, without either one or the other. And they are justified therein by the plain reason of the thing. This also justifies us, in baptizing infants, though without express command, or clear example.

If it be said, "But there is a command, (1 Cor. xi. 28.) 'Let a man, ανθρωπος, examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread:' the word for *man* in the original signifying indifferently either men or women." I grant it does in other places, but here the word *himself* immediately following, confines it to men only. "But women are implied in it, though not expressed." Certainly: and so are infants in all nations.

"But we have Scripture example for it: for it is said in the Acts, 'The apostles continued in prayer and supplication with the women.'" True, in prayer and supplication; but it is not said, in communicating. Nor have we one clear example of it in the bible.

Since then they admit women to the communion, without any express command or example, but only by consequence

from Scripture, they can never shew reason why infants should not be admitted to baptism, when there are so many scriptures which by fair consequence shew they have a right to it, and are capable of it.

As for the texts wherein God reproves his people for doing 'what he commanded them not:' that phrase evidently means, what he had forbidden; particularly in that passage of Jeremiah. The whole verse is, 'They have built the high places of Tophet, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not.' Now God had expressly forbidden them to do this; and that on pain of death. But surely there is a difference between the Jews offering their sons and daughters to devils, and Christians offering theirs to God.

On the whole, therefore, it is not only lawful and innocent, but meet, right, and our bounden duty, in conformity to the uninterrupted practice of the whole church of Christ from the earliest ages, to consecrate our children to God by baptism, as the Jewish church were commanded to do by circumcision.

Nov. 11, 1756.

[Having only a few pages to spare before we must close this Volume, and being, therefore, unwilling to enter upon a new subject, we embrace the opportunity, thus afforded us, of subjoining to the above, another excellent little tract on Infant-Baptism, which, although not of Mr. Wesley's Original composition, was extracted by him with great judgment and care from the larger work of a late Writer. We do this the rather because we believe our readers will be glad to see so important a subject still further elucidated and confirmed.]

THOUGHTS

UPON

INFANT-BAPTISM.

EXTRACTED FROM A LATE WRITER.

THE Baptism of Infants has been a troublesome dispute almost ever since the Reformation: but I shall only rehearse a few arguments commonly used to vindicate the practice of baptizing Children.

I. The Covenant made with Abraham and his seed, (Gen. xvii.) is the Covenant of Grace; it includes, and was designed to extend to all believers. When God promised to be a God to Abraham, and to his seed, St. Paul assures us, that by Abraham's seed is meant all that should imitate the faith of Abraham, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, (Gal. iii. 7.) 'Know ye therefore, that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham,' (ver. 29,) 'If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

The same spiritual promises and blessings, which belonged to the church under the *Old Testament*, belong also to it under the *New*, (Acts ii. 39; 2 Cor. i. 20.) Abraham is represented as the root, or stock of the visible church, (Rom. xi. 16, 17, &c.) The Jewish church are the natural branches of it: the Gentiles are ingrafted into the same stock, (ver. 17, 24,) and partake of the blessings of it.

From these texts, (and many others might easily be produced,) it seems evident, that the Jewish and the Christian

church are but one and the same visible church in a continued succession, though under different administrations and ordinances.

II. The covenant made with Abraham, and with his seed, is still in force. This is implied in what has been already said: but it ought to be particularly considered. It is plainly asserted by the apostle, Gal. iii. 17. To the same purpose the apostle speaks in Rom. iv. 14, 16. Here he declares, that the promise made to Abraham, is not made of none effect, or abolished, but is sure to all believers in all ages.

Ever since God called the family of Abraham, and settled his visible church in it, he never suffered it to fail. It was an everlasting covenant that he made with Abraham, to be his God, and the God of his seed, (Gen. xvii. 7,) that he might be the father both of Jews and Gentiles, who were brought into the church, as in Rom. iv. 11, 16.

III. The *children* of the Jews were visible members of the Jewish church under the covenant of Abraham, and as such they were acknowledged, and received into it by circumcision, as the door of entrance, Gen. xvii. 9—14.

IV. The *children* of Christians were never cut off from this privilege, when their fathers were received into the church, whether they were Jews or Gentiles; and therefore they are members of the Christian church also, under spiritual promises and blessings. When the Jews, the *natural branches*, were cut off from the good olive-tree, their *little buds* were cut off with them also; and when the Gentiles by a profession of faith were *grafted* in as *foreign* branches, their *little buds* were grafted in with them. Christ received the *children* that were brought by their parents, and 'laid his hands on them, and blessed them, and said, Of such is the kingdom of heaven,' (Mark x. 13—16.) The promises of the Old Testament, wherein children are included in some of the prophets, do refer to the Gentile church as well as the Jewish, (Isa. xliv. 3, 5. Isa. lxv. 23. Joel ii. 28, 29.) For it is "the blessing of Abraham" which reaches to his seed, "that comes upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ,"

(Gal. iii. 14.) Rom. xv. 8, 9, "that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy."

V. *Baptism* is now (like circumcision of old) the *sign of* God's covenant. This is plainly intimated by the apostle in Gal. iii. 27, 29. Circumcision being abolished, and baptism coming in the room of it, baptism should be applied to all those, who have any interest in the covenant, as circumcision was. Now that baptism is come in the room of circumcision, seems plain from Col. ii. 12, where the apostle argues, that being baptized, we need not be circumcised: and besides baptism and circumcision signify the same thing, i. e. the removal of sin; one by cutting off, and the other by washing away.

VI. As this seems to manifest the right of the children of Christians to these blessings, or that they have an interest in this covenant, so there are some considerations, which render it very probable that children should be admitted into the visible church, by the Christian door of entrance, that is baptism. As for instance,

First, the gospel, which is a dispensation of greater grace, does not lessen, but *increase* the privileges of the church: it takes away yokes and burdens indeed, such as circumcision was, Acts xv. 10, but does not *diminish* its honours or privileges.

Again, when the father or mother of a family believed in Christ, their households were baptized, together with themselves even where there is no mention that the household believed in Christ also: as in the case of Lydia and Stephanas, Acts xvi. 15. 1 Cor. i. 16. Now children are usually a considerable part of the household.

Yet further, children under the *New Testament* are as capable of receiving the blessings signified, and fulfilling the duties enjoined, as ever they were under the *Old*. It is granted, that they neither could *then*, nor can *now* understand the blessings nor the duties; yet they might receive the seal of circumcision, or of baptism, as a bond laid upon them in their infancy, to fulfil the obligations and the duties of riper years, and as an encouragement to wait, and hope

for the blessings. This was the case of Jewish infants, and why may not Christians be favoured with it also?

The covenant made with Abraham, and with his *Seed*, Gen. xvii. 7, included *infants*. This covenant is not repealed or disannulled (II. Ar.) It was intended to extend to Christians, and their *Seed* (I.) it is confirmed by God to Christ, (Gal. iii. 17,) i. e. It was made with Christ, considered as including all his members in him. As circumcision of old was the sign of admitting persons into this covenant; so now baptism is the *sign* of admitting persons into the *same* individual covenant (V.) therefore it must be administered to the same persons, i. e. to infants, as well as to the adult. When the covenant is the same, the privileges and promises the same, the seal must have been the same, if it had not been changed; and the seed of Abraham to inherit must be the same also, unless there is some alteration made in the gospel. The seed in covenant included infants; and therefore infants are still part of that seed of Abraham. The seed of Abraham had a right to the seal of the covenant; their right still continues as the covenant does; and therefore they are to be admitted, infants in particular, to baptism, the present seal of this covenant.

If God thought fit to make any alterations in any circumstance of this covenant, it seems necessary, that he should give notice of it in the gospel. Accordingly as he thought fit to change the old sign of circumcision for baptism, so he has in the gospel, expressly warned us of the change, Acts xv. 24.—xxi. 21, 25. Gal. v. 2, 3. And as he chose to make one alteration, with regard to the persons to whom the seal of the said covenant should be applied, and to ordain that females, as well as males, should be baptized, so he has expressly told us of this alteration in the gospel, Acts viii. 12. xvi. 14, 15. Gal. iii. 27, 28. In like manner it must be concluded, that if God would have had a farther alteration made, if infants of believing parents, that were formerly to partake of the seal of this covenant, were upon the coming of Christ, to partake of it no more; undoubtedly God would have given us express warning of it,

and have told us in the gospel, that though infants, before Christ came, were in the covenant, now they are to be shut out of it. But as the gospel says no such thing, it seems to me certain it cannot be true. It is then incumbent upon those who oppose infant-baptism, if they would make their point good, positively to prove this by texts, which expressly declare, that Christ has cast infants out of the covenant, though before they were in it. But no such texts can be produced: therefore it appears they *continue* in covenant, and have still a right to the seal of it, which is *baptism*.

It will be in vain here to urge, that the Scripture sufficiently declares against applying this seal of the covenant to infants, by making faith and repentance the conditions of baptism. For this kind of arguing would as well prove, that infants heretofore were not qualified for circumcision, which yet no man will assert. As this argument would prove too much, it must be looked upon as proving nothing. It will be needful to add as a distinct head, that

VII. The texts which speak of faith as the term of baptism, do not at all imply, that infants are not to be baptized. In the case just now mentioned there is a parallel between baptism and circumcision. If a Heathen heretofore was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and did hereupon desire to be circumcised, he was admitted to circumcision upon the account of his faith in the God of Israel. And till he professed this faith, he could not lawfully be circumcised. And if a Jewish prophet had been inviting a set of Heathens to Judaism, and circumcision, he would have been forced to talk in such a manner as this, viz. 'Believe in the one true God, and ye shall be circumcised. He that believeth, and is circumcised, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned. Repent of your idolatry, and other sins, and be circumcised. Circumcision now saveth us, not the putting away a bit of flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward the true God. Arise then and be circumcised, and put away your sins.' In this manner, the Jewish prophet must have spoken to his Heathen audience. And if he had succeeded, and made proselytes, the history

of it must have been expressed in such a language as this, viz. 'When the Heathens believed the prophet preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, they were circumcised. A certain convert said to the Jewish prophet, What should hinder my being circumcised? The prophet answered, if you believe with all your heart, you may. He replied, I believe that there is one God, and that Moses is his prophet. And hereupon he circumcised him. Others hearing, believed, and were circumcised.' This, I apprehend, must have been the language, in case the prophet had preached to a Heathen nation, and proselyted them. And yet, I suppose, that no one would, from this kind of language infer, that infants were not to be circumcised, or that actual faith in God was so universally necessary to circumcision, as that infants were not to receive it, for want of actual faith. As this will be allowed by every one, it must be acknowledged also, by parity of reason, that the very same expressions, when in the same circumstances applied to baptism, cannot imply that infants are not to be baptized. All I now contend for is, that they do not even *seem* to imply, that infants are not to be baptized; for this they cannot do, unless in the case above represented, they did also imply, that infants were not heretofore to be circumcised. As it will be allowed, they would not have implied this, they cannot consistently be thought to imply the other.

If it had been fit to have continued circumcision, as the sign of God's covenant, and Christ had actually continued it, when he gave his apostles a commission to proselyte the Gentile nations, I do not see how he could have expressed his thoughts better than this, "Go, proselyte all nations, circumcising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," i. e. Prove to the Gentiles, that Jesus is the Christ, and when they profess to believe this, circumcise them. Would the apostles, or any one else, have inferred from hence, that infants, not having actual faith, were not to be circumcised? Nay, rather on the other hand, the apostle would have reasoned thus: "The

sign of God's covenant, circumcision, has hitherto been *confined* to one nation, even that of the Israelites; but now Christ has commanded us to extend it to *all* the nations of the earth; he has ordered us to go and proselyte all nations, and circumcise them. Surely it is his intention, that we should take our *pattern* from the practice of circumcision among the Jews. He cannot therefore be supposed to mean, that we must only circumcise grown men, who are capable of believing the gospel, and profess so to do. It is evident he intends, that when we shall have circumcised such, we should next circumcise their *male* children; and that in *after* generations, the males among them should be circumcised the eighth day. Thus it was at the first institution. Abraham was first circumcised, then his children, of whatsoever ages they happened to be; and in after generations their children were circumcised on the eighth day. This is a direction to us. And when we are bid to "go, *proselyte* all nations, *circumcising* them," we plainly see, we are not forbidden to circumcise infants; but, on the contrary, are ordered to imitate this example of our father Abraham." I observed, if circumcision had been retained, as the seal of the covenant, and the same commission had been given to the apostles, as now was given them, only the word *circumcise* used instead of *baptize*, no one would have imagined, that form of expression would in the least have interfered with the circumcision of infants. It is as certain then that the same form of words, applied to baptism, cannot in the least interfere with the baptism of infants.

These considerations, I think, fully take off the force of all the objections that men think they find in the Scripture against the baptism of infants. If there be any thing in the nature of baptism, as a seal of the covenant, which confines it to such as believe, there must have been the same limiting nature in circumcision, which was a seal of the same covenant. But as this is certainly false, the other cannot be true. If an infant was not by reason of his age, unqualified to receive the sign of circumcision, "a seal of

the righteousness of faith," an infant cannot now by reason of his age, be consistently thought unqualified for baptism, which is a seal of the same.

Farther to confirm this point, if it needs confirmation, it may be observed, that the same forms of expression, which are urged out of the New Testament, to prove that infants are not qualified for baptism, for want of actual faith and repentance, would equally prove them unqualified for salvation. From Christ's saying, "He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved," some have inferred, that a person must actually believe or else he cannot be baptized. With as much strength of reason they might infer, that a person cannot be saved unless he actually believe; especially since it is added, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Yet it is acknowledged, that though infants do not believe, yet they shall not be damned. It is evident then to all, that this text must be interpreted as speaking *only* of the *adult*, who were capable of hearing and believing the gospel. Since then it does not at all speak of infants, they may be saved, and may be baptized too, notwithstanding they are not believers. The method of proving that they may be *saved without faith*, will as necessarily demonstrate, that they may be baptized without their own faith, notwithstanding any thing that is laid down in this text. Thus all the objections against infant baptism are at once cut off.

VIII. In the Christian church from its earliest ages, and we think from the apostles' time, it has been the custom to baptize the infant children of professed Christians.

To prove this I shall produce a few witnesses, among many. 1. Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the apostles, in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, page 59, plainly speaks of baptism, as being to Christians in the stead of circumcision. And in his *Apology for the Christians*, near the beginning, he says, "Several persons among us of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, were discipled," (or made disciples,) "to Christ in or from their childhood." Please to observe, that Justin's word, εμαθητευθησαν, *were discipled*, or *made disciples*, is the very same

word that had been used by St. Matthew, xxviii. 19, in expressing our Saviour's command, μαθητευσαῖε, *disciple all nations*. And it was done to these persons, Justin says, in or from their childhood. And he wrote that *Apology* within forty years of the death of the apostles: and seventy years reckoned back from that time, do reach into the midst of the apostles' time.

2. Irenæus, born about the time of St. John's death, in his treatise, *Adv. Hæres. lib. 2. cap.* 3, speaking of Christ, says, "Not disdaining, nor going in a way above human nature, nor breaking in his own person the law which he had set for mankind: but sanctifying every several age by the likeness it has to him. For he came to save all persons by himself: *all*, I mean, who by him, are *regenerated* unto God; *infants*, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elderly persons. Therefore he went through the several ages: for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants, &c."

This testimony, which reckons infants among those that are regenerated, is plain and full. Dr. Wall has largely shewn, that the word regenerating does, particularly in the writings of Irenæus, and in the usual phrase of those times, signify baptizing; he mentions some places, which expressly declare, that Christ was *regenerated* by John; meaning that he was *baptized* by him.

Near the time that Irenæus wrote the above treatise, Clemens Alexandrinus wrote his *Pœdagog*, wherein he expressly says, "The word regeneration is the name of baptism," (l. 1. c. 6, near the beginning:) his thus plainly declaring, that regenerating is the common name for baptizing, does very much confirm the argument taken from Irenæus, who asserts, that infants were regenerated unto God.

Please to take notice how near this man was to the apostles' time. Irenæus himself says, (l. v. c. 30,) that the revelation made to St. John in Patmos, was but a little before his time, and that revelation was five or six years before St. John's death. In an age so nigh the apostles,

and in a place where one of them had so lately lived, the Christians could not be ignorant what had been done in their time, in a matter so public as the baptizing, or not baptizing of infants.

3. Origen is not only express for the baptizing of infants, but gives his reason for it: in his eighth homily, or sermon, on Leviticus, c. 12, he thus says, "Hear David speaking; 'I was,' says he, 'shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me:' shewing, that every soul that is born in the flesh is polluted with the filth of sin and iniquity: and that therefore that was said, which we mentioned before; that 'none is free from pollution, though his life be but the length of one day.'

"Besides all this, let it be considered, what is the reason, that whereas the baptism of the church is given for the forgiveness of sins, infants are also, by the usage of the church, baptized; when, if there was nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them."

Again, in his homily on Luke xiv. he says as follows: "Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to that sense that we mentioned even now: 'None is free from pollution, though his life be but the length of one day upon earth?' And it is for that reason, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized."

Yet farther, in the fifth book of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, he says thus, "And also in the law it is commanded, that a sacrifice be offered for every child that is born; 'a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons; of which one is for a sin-offering, the other for a burnt-offering." For what sin is this one pigeon offered? Can the child that is new-born have committed any sin? It has even *then* sin, for which the sacrifice is commanded to be offered; from which even he, 'whose life is but of one day,' is denied to be free.

"For this also it was, that the church had from the apostles an order *to give baptism to infants.* For they to whom the divine mysteries were committed, knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit."

The reader is desired to observe, that Origen not only says, that it was the *custom* of the church to baptize infants, but he expressly affirms, "*That the church received an* ORDER *from the Apostles to give baptism even to infants.*"

4. There is one circumstance that makes Origen a more competent witness to give evidence, whether the baptizing of infants had been in use time out of mind, or not, than most other authors that we have left to us of that age; because he was himself of a family that had been Christian for a long time. The other witnesses that I have mentioned, except Irenæus, must have been themselves baptized in adult age; because they were of Heathen parents. But Origen's father was a martyr for Christ in the persecution under Severus, the year after the apostles, 102. And Eusebius (in his history, book 6, ch. 19,) assures us, that his forefathers had been Christians for several generations.

Now since Origen was born in the eighty-fifth year after the apostles, (for he was seventeen years old when his father suffered martyrdom,) his grandfather, or at least his great-grand-father, must have lived in the apostles' time. And as he could not be ignorant whether he was himself baptized in infancy, so he had no farther than his own family to go, to inquire what was practised in the time of the apostles.

Besides that, he was a very learned man, and could not be ignorant of the use of the churches; and in most of which he had also travelled; for as he was born and bred at Alexandria, so it appears out of Eusebius' history, b. 6. that he had lived in Greece, and at Rome, and in Cappadocia, and Arabia, and spent the main part of his life in Syria and Palestine.

5. What I apprehend very much strengthens the truth of infant-baptism, that it is of a divine original, is this, "Abou

one hundred and fifty years after the death of St. John the Apostle, there was an assembly of sixty-six bishops, who spoke of infant baptism, as a known, established, and uncontested practice." One Fidus questioned, whether infants were to be baptized so soon as between two and three days after their birth, and whether it would not be better to defer their baptism till they were eight days old, as was observed in circumcision; which scruples he proposed to this assembly, and in which he desired their resolution, which they sent in a letter to him; part of which I shall transcribe.

"Cyprian, and the rest of the bishops, who were present at the council, sixty-six in number, to Fidus our brother, greeting.

"We read your letter, most dear brother, but as to the case of infants: whereas you judge, 'that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born; and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized, and sanctified, before the eighth day after he is born: we were all in our assembly of the contrary opinion.

"We judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining the grace by the law that is now appointed; and that the spiritual circumcision ought not to be restrained by the circumcision that was according to the flesh: but that all are to be admitted to the grace of Christ; since Peter, speaking in the Acts of the Apostles, says, 'The Lord has shewn me, that no person is to be called common, or unclean.'

"This, therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the assembly; that it is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful, and benign, and affectionate to all: which rule, as it holds for all, so we think it is more especially to be observed in reference to infants newly born; to whom our help and the divine mercy is rather to be granted; because, by their cries and tears at their first entrance into the world, they do intimate nothing so much, as that they implore compassion."

From this piece of history it appears, that both the persons who moved the doubt, and all the persons who resolved it, unanimously agreed in this, that infants were to be baptized, and that it was the settled custom of the church to baptize them. If the assembly had been against infant-baptism, they would have answered; 'It is so far from being necessary to baptize children on the eighth day after their birth, that they ought not to be baptized at all, till they are of age to judge and act for themselves.' But none of those bishops was in this sentiment. They all looked upon it as a thing uncontested, that infants were to be baptized.

If we look back from this time to the space that had passed from the apostles time, which was but one hundred and fifty years, we must conclude, that it was easy then to know the practice of Christians in the apostles' days, for some of these sixty-six bishops may be thought to be at this time sixty or seventy years old themselves, which reaches almost to half the space: and at that time when they were infants, there must have been several alive, that were born within the apostles age. And such could not be ignorant whether infants were baptized in that age, when they themselves were some of those infants. And as there was no dispute, or difference of opinion, (as there must have been among so many, if any innovation had been made: for it is here expressly said, there was not one of Fidus's mind,) that infant baptism must be delayed till the eighth day; much less then were there any of opinion, that it wa not to be administered at all.

"In a doctrinal point," as Mr. Baxter well observes, " mistake is easier, than in a bare narration of some one fa but in a matter of fact of so public notice, and which many thousands were partakers in, as baptism was, could they be ignorant?"

Suppose it were a question now among us, whether sons were baptized at age only, or in infancy also, years before we were born; were it not easy to kno truth, what by report, and what by records?

I shall conclude what I have to remark on this testimony with observing, that we see here confirmed what was said before, that baptism was reckoned to be to Christians in the room of circumcision. For it was upon that account that Fidus thought it must be at the time of the old circumcision; and the bishops of the council, though denying that, do call it the spiritual [or Christian] circumcision.

6. Ambrose commenting on those words, (Luke i. 17,) where the Angel prophesies of John the Baptist, 'he shall go before him in the spirit and powers of Elias;' after having shewn, in several particulars, how John, in his office, did resemble Elias, and having mentioned that miracle of Elias dividing the river Jordan, adds thus: "But perhaps this may seem to be fulfilled in our time and in the apostles time. For that returning of the river waters backward toward the spring-head, which was caused by Elias, when the river was divided (as the Scripture says, 'Jordan was driven back,') signified the sacrament of the laver of salvation, which was afterwards to be instituted; by which those infants that are baptized, are reformed back again from wickedness [or a corrupt state] to the primitive state of their nature."

He means they are freed from the guilt of original sin, and in some sense reduced back to the primitive state, in which man was, before that happened. He plainly speaks of infants, as baptized in the apostles time, as well as in his own; and makes John, in baptizing infants for the reformation of their nature to the primitive purity of it, to resemble Elias in turning back the waters to their spring-head.

Austin, in his treatise *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, Lib. 4. c. 23. having had occasion to speak of the penitent thief, who obtained salvation without baptism, shews, that that is no more an argument against the necessity of baptism, where it may be had, than the example of baptized infants obtaining salvation without faith, is an argument against the necessity of faith, where the subject is capable of it. Near the conclusion of the fourth book, he says,

"And as the thief who by necessity went without baptism, was saved, because, by his piety, he had it spiritually: so where baptism is had, though the party by necessity go without that [faith] which the thief had, yet he is saved.

"Which the whole body of the church holds, as delivered to them, in the case of little infants baptized: who certainly cannot yet believe with the heart to righteousness, or confess with the mouth to salvation, as the thief could; nay, by their crying and noise, while the sacrament is administering, they disturb the holy mysteries: and yet no Christian man of any sort will say, they are baptized to no purpose.

"And if any one do ask for divine authority in this matter, though that which the whole church practises, and which has not been instituted by councils, but was ever in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing ordered by the authority of the apostles: yet we may besides take a true estimate, how much the sacrament of baptism does avail infants, by the circumcision which God's former people received." In what follows, he most plainly declares, that baptism is to the Christian infants, what circumcision was to the Jewish.

Though Austin speaks of infant-baptism in this place, but occasionally, his words are a full evidence, that it was then universally practised, and had been so beyond the memory of any man, or of any record: that they took it to be a thing that had not been enacted by any council, but had been in use from the beginning of Christianity. And they had then but 300 years to look back to the times of the apostles, whereas we now have upwards of sixteen hundred. And many writings and records, which are now lost, were then extant, and easily known.

It deserves a particular remark, that most of these witnesses for infant baptism, were not only faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, but were faithful unto death, joyfully suffering martyrdom for the truth: surely this is a great accession to the strength of their testimony.

All these things put together, seem to prove, that infant-

baptism was practised in the church of Christ from the beginning, and, consequently, that it is of an apostolical and divine original.

As for the first four hundred years, there appears only one man, Tertullian, that advised the delay of infant-baptism in some cases, and one Gregory, that did perhaps practise such delay in the case of his children, but no society of men so thinking, or so practising; so in the next seven hundred years, there is not so much as one man to be found, that either spoke for, or practised such delay. But all the contrary. And when one sect among the Waldenses declared against the baptizing of infants, as being incapable of salvation, the main body of that people rejected their opinion: and those of them that held that opinion, quickly dwindled away, and disappeared; there being no more heard of holding that tenet, till the rising of the German antipædobaptists, in the year 1522. "And all the national churches now in the world do profess and practise infant-baptism."

This brings to my remembrance a very clear proof for the baptism of infants, which much satisfied the mind of the great and good Mr. Baxter; I shall relate it in his own words. "I am fully satisfied, that Mr. Tombs cannot shew me any society, (I think not one man,) that ever opened their mouths against the baptism of infants, till about two hundred years ago; which confirms me much, that it is from the apostles time, or else some one would have been found as an opposer of it; even as I profess, seriously, that it much satisfieth my conscience, that Christ and his Apostles did never shut out the infants of believing Jews, (and consequently not of believing Gentiles,) from being members of his visible church, in that I never find in all the New Testament one word of exception, arguing, murmuring, or dissatisfaction against it: whereas it cannot possibly be conceived, but those Jews who kept such a stir before they would let go circumcision, the sign of church-membership, when, yet they had baptism, another sign, would undoubtedly have been much more scandalized at the unchurching

of all their children, and would have, much hardlier have let go that privilege of their church-membership, or at least have raised some scruple about it, which might have occasioned one word of satisfaction from some one of the Apostles; especially when Paul calls them holy, and Christ saith, 'Suffer them to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.' I know not how Mr. Tombs, and such others think on these things; but for my part, they stick so close to my conscience that I dare not say, Christ would have no infants received into his visible church among the number of Christians, when I find he once placed them in the church; and neither Mr. Tombs, nor any man breathing, can shew me one word of scripture where ever Christ did put them out again; and yet these men pretend to stand to the determination of Scripture. I would this one thing were impartially considered."

With regard to the mode of baptizing, I would only add, Christ no where, as far as I can find, requires *dipping*, but only *baptizing*: which word, many most eminent for learning and piety have declared, signifies to *pour on*, or *sprinkle*, as well as to *dip*. As our Lord has graciously given us a word of such extensive meaning, doubtless the parent, or the person to be baptized, if he be adult, ought to choose which way he best approves. What God has left *indifferent*, it becomes not *man* to make necessary.

I think it proper in this place to subjoin what Dr. Watts had declared concerning the signification of this word. "The Greek word *baptizo*, (says he) signifies *to wash* any thing properly *by water coming over it*: now there are several ways of such washing, (viz.) *sprinkling* water on it in a small quantity, *pouring* water on it in a larger quantity, or *dipping* it under water, either in part or in whole: and since this seems to be left undetermined in Scripture to one particular mode; therefore any of these ways of washing may be sufficient to answer the purpose of this ordinance. Now that the Greek word signifies *washing* a thing in general by water coming over it, and not always *dipping*, is argued by learned men, not only from ancient

Greek authors, but from the New Testament itself, as Luke xi. 38. 'The Pharisees marvelled that Jesus had not first washed before dinner;' in Greek, that he was not first *baptized;* and can it be supposed, that they would have him *dip* himself in water? Mark vii. 4. 'The Pharisees, when they come from the market, eat not except they are washed;' in Greek, except they are *baptized;* surely it cannot mean except they were dipped. And if this should be restrained to signify washing their hands only, yet it it does not signify necessarily dipping them; for the manner of washing their hands of old, was by pouring water on them, as 'Elisha poured water on the hands of Elijah,' 2 Kings iii. 11. Yet further, they practised the washing of tables, (in Greek, *baptism of beds*) as well as *cups* and *vessels*. Now beds could not usually be washed by dipping, Heb. ix. 10. The Jews had divers washings prescribed by Moses, (in Greek, *baptisms*) which were sprinkling and pouring water on things, as well as plunging them all over in water. 'The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, in their passage through the Red Sea, at their march from Egypt,' (1 Cor. x. 2.) Not that they were dipped in the water, but they were sprinkled by the clouds over their heads, and perhaps by the water which stood up in heaps as they passed by.

Besides, pouring or sprinkling more naturally represents most of the spiritual blessings signified by baptism, (viz.) the sprinkling the blood of Christ on the conscience, or the pouring out of the Spirit on the person baptized, or sprinkling him with clean water, as an emblem of the influence of the Spirit; all which are the things signified in baptism as different representations of the cleansing away of the guilt or defilement of sin thereby.

I conclude, since this controversy has difficulties attending it, persons of an honest and sincere soul, in searching out the truth, may happen to run into different opinions: but the things wherein we agree, are so important, as should not suffer us to quarrel about the lesser things wherein we differ. Our brethren, who reject infant-bap-

tism, as well as we who practise it, all agree in a belief of the sacred institution of this ordinance: we all agree, that children should be devoted to God, and should be partakers of all the privileges which Scripture admits, and that they should grow up under all possible obligations to duty; and since each of us desires to find out the Will of Christ, and practise it accordingly, it is a most unreasonable thing, that we should be angry with each other, because some of us are devoted to God and Christ by this ceremony, a little *sooner* or a little *later* than others; or because some devote their children to God in baptism, as a claim of privileges, and an obligation to duties, before they can do this for themselves, and are capable of acting therein: or because some of us think this ordinance requires much water, and that the whole body should be immersed in it; others suppose, a little is sufficient, and that he who has the face and head washed in this solemnity, has as true a significancy of gospel benefits and obligations, as he, who has his whole body put under water, since our Saviour thought so when he washed Peter's feet, John xiii. 10. In short, where faith in Christ, and love to God, and obedience to the sanctifying operations of the Spirit, are made necessary to salvation, and agreed upon by us all, it is pity that these lesser things should raise such unhappy contentions among the disciples of the Blessed Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

SERIOUS THOUGHTS

CONCERNING

GODFATHERS AND GODMOTHERS.

I. In the ancient church, when baptism was administered, there were usually two or more *Sponsors*, (so Tertullian calls them, a hundred years after the death of St. John,) for every person to be baptized. As these were *witnesses* before God and the church, of the solemn engagement those persons then entered into, so they *undertook* (as the very word implies) to watch over those souls in a peculiar manner, to instruct, admonish, exhort, and build them up in the faith once delivered to the saints. These were considered as a kind of spiritual parents to the baptized, whether they were infants or at man's estate, and were expected to supply whatever spiritual helps were wanting, either through the death or neglect of the natural parents.

II. These have been retained in the Christian church from the earliest times, as the reason for them was the same in all ages. In our church they are termed (by a proper and expressive name) *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*. And it is appointed, "That there shall be for every male child to be baptized, two godfathers and one godmother; and for every female, one godfather and two godmothers."

III. But it is objected against these, 1. That there is no mention of godfathers and godmothers in Scripture; 2. That many undertake this without ever considering what they undertake, or once seriously thinking how to perform it; and, 3. That no serious man would undertake it, because it is impossible to perform it.

IV. I answer, first, It is undoubtedly true, godfathers and godmothers are not mentioned in Scripture. And therefore it cannot be said, they are absolutely necessary, or that baptism cannot be administered without them. But yet it may be said they are highly expedient. For when they are prudently chosen, they may be of unspeakable use to the persons baptized, and a great relief and comfort to the parents of them.

V. I answer, secondly, It is too true, that many undertake this solemn office, without ever considering what they undertake; giddy, ignorant persons, (if not openly vicious,) who never once seriously think how to perform it. But whose fault is this? It is not the fault of the church, which carefully guards against this thing, by ordering, "That none but communicants can be admitted to be godfathers or godmothers." Now communicants we may presume to be serious persons, who will both consider and perform what they undertake. It is altogether the fault of those foolish parents, who will, on any account whatever, either desire or suffer those to be sponsors for their children, that do not take care of their own souls. It is these inconsiderate and cruel men, who have no compassion for their own flesh, that deprive their children of all the benefits of this wise institution, and bring a scandal on the institution itself, by their wicked abuse of it. I therefore earnestly exhort all who have any concern, either for their own or their children's souls, at all hazards to procure such persons to be sponsors, as truly fear God. Regard not whether they are rich or poor: and if they are poor, see that it be no expense to them. You will then tear up by the roots one of the most plausible objections which can be made against this primitive custom.

VI. For, thirdly, There is no reason why any truly serious man should scruple to undertake the office. If you suppose godfathers and godmothers undertake what is impossible to perform, you entirely mistake. And your mistake lies here: you think they undertake what they do not. Do not you think the sponsors themselves undertake or promise, that the child shall "renounce the devil and all his works,

constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commandments?" In truth, they neither undertake nor promise any such thing. When they answer, "I renounce them all:" "This I steadfastly believe:" "I will:" (obediently keep God's holy will and commandments,) they promise nothing at all; they engage for nothing: it is another person that promises all this. Whatever is then promised or undertaken, it is not by them, but by the child. It is *his* part, not *their's*. So the church tells you expressly: "This infant must for *his* part promise." It is *he* promises in these words, not *they*. So again, "This child hath promised—to renounce the devil, to believe in God, and serve him." If it be said, "But why are those questions inserted, which seem to mean what they really do not?" I answer, I did not insert them, and should not be sorry had they not been inserted at all. I believe the compilers of our liturgy inserted them because they were used in all the ancient liturgies. And their deep reverence for the primitive church made them excuse some impropriety of expression.

VII. What then is *your* parts, who are sponsors for the child? This likewise is expressly told you. "It is *your* part to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he hath here made by you. You shall call upon him to hear sermons, and shall provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health; and that this child may be virtuously brought up, to lead a godly and a Christian life."

VIII. Can any thing then be plainer, than what you do not, and what you do undertake? You do not undertake, that he shall renounce the devil and serve God: this the baptized himself undertakes. You do undertake to see that he be taught what things a Christian ought to know and believe. And what is there in this which is impossible? Which any serious person may not perform?

IX. If then you that are parents will be so wise and kind to your children, as to wave every other consideration,

and to choose for their sponsors those persons alone who truly fear and serve God: if some of you who love God, and love one another, agree to perform this office of love for each other's children: and if all you who undertake it perform it faithfully, with all the wisdom and power God hath given you: what a foundation of holiness and happiness may be laid, even to your late posterity! Then it may justly be hoped, that not only you and your house, but also the children that shall be born, shall serve the LORD.

ATHLONE, *August* 6, 1752.

END OF VOL. THIRTEEN.

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